1-A-Day SCRIPTURE



Scripture and Notes for Each Day of the Year

By
M. Love

JANUARY	JULY
FEBRUARY	AUGUST
MARCH	SEPTEMBER
APRIL	OCTOBER
MAY	NOVEMBER
JUNE	DECEMBER

Escape? So Great Salvation	Between 2 Beliefs
A Confederacy	Sacrifice: Thanksgiving
Another Jesus, Spirit, & Gospel	Be Not Conformed
Blessed	David and Goliath
Familiar Spirits & the Endor Woman	Not Earth, Wind, -OR- Fire
LORD, LORD!	Grace, Faith-Saved

Noah & the Flood	7 Sons of Sceva
They See WHO You Are	The Tower of Babel
WHO is My Family?	The Way, The Truth & The Life
The Law of Faith	TRADITION
Woman @ the Well	D.R.C.I
2 Evils	The REALLY REAL War

January



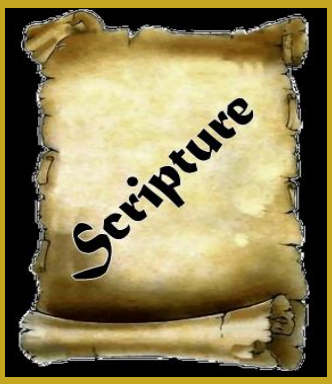
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31		It's perfectly alright to READ and to THINK FOR YOURSELF.

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QUESTIONS may often be as important as ANSWERS.		ANSWERS sometimes come because someone dares to ask QUESTIONS.

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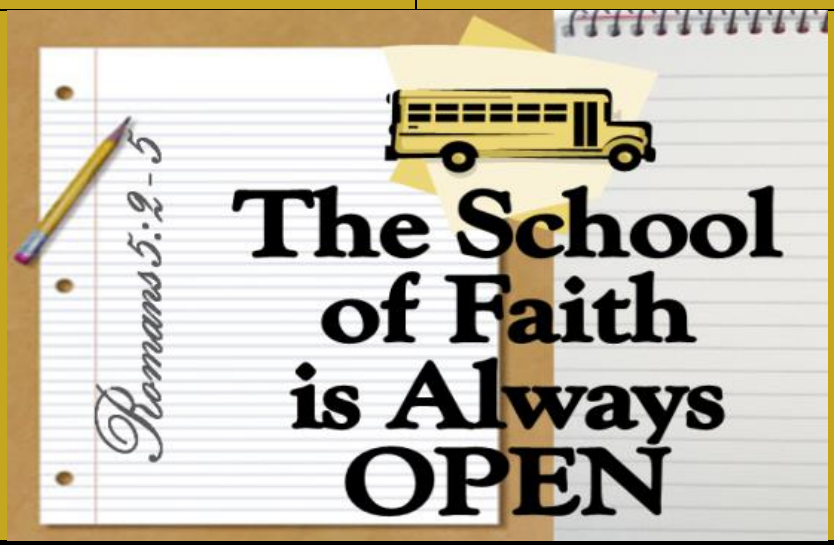
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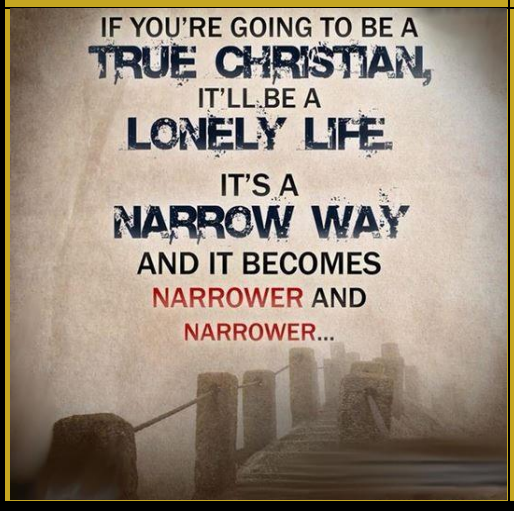


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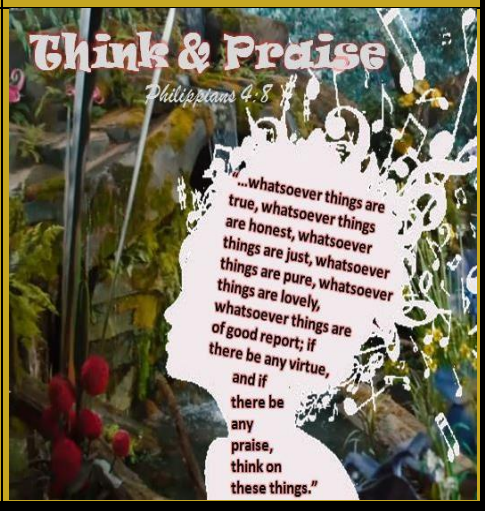


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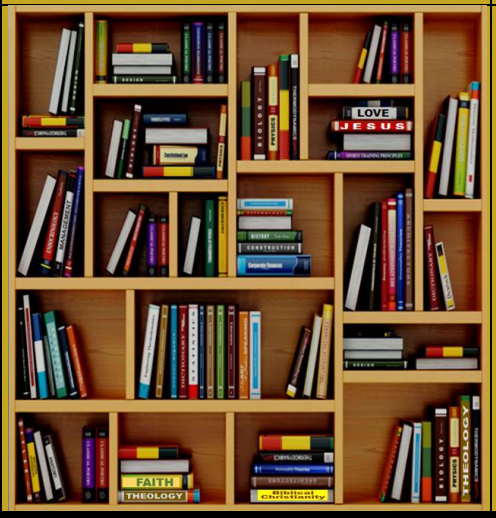
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31 	Scripture does not contain “stories”. There are biblical accounts, events, parables, and Bible history.	The earth is approximately 6,000 years of age; not millions or billions of years old.

January 1

Ecclesiasticus 27:8 (1611 KJV)

"Long, Righteous Robe"



If thou followest righteousness, thou shalt obtain her, and put her on, as a glorious long robe.

Can a person pursue "righteousness" but not find it? Not according to certain scriptures. If... Then.... If you do *THIS*, then *THAT* will happen. The problem is not that people look for righteousness but are unsuccessful; it's not that they can't find it. The problem is that many aren't genuinely seeking righteousness. They may seek religious organizations or various other so-called "spiritual" outlets (which sometimes involve cults or even occult activities), but they are not really seeking true righteousness.

Many are not interested in following godly righteous living. Even so, they expect glorious, long

robes. They think they will be rewarded for following things other than righteousness. She hides. Lady righteousness avoids the casual pursuer in favor of those who are seriously interested. She clings to and wraps herself around the sincere seeker as if she were a beautiful garment that fully covers—a glorious, long robe.



January 2

Matthew 2:1-23 (AKJV)

"Plans, Prophecies, & Places"

2:2

Men, who came from the **east**, went to Jerusalem asking where the newborn King of the Jews could be found since they had seen "**his star in the east**".

2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 2:3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 2:5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it

From where in the "**east**" did they come?

How many men were there?

How did they know what "his star" looked like?

2:3 – 2:6

Why did the Jewish leaders readily tell Herod where the King was located?

is written by the prophet, 2:6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. 2:7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. 2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. 2:9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented

2:7

Why did Herod want to know "what time the star appeared" and why is there no answer given to that question in this account?

2:9 – 2:12

Knowing Herod had bad motives in wanting to locate the King, why did the star lead the men directly to the young child?

Did God allow innocent children to be killed by an evil leader?

unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. 2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. 2:13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. 2:14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be **fulfilled** which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and

Prophecies Fulfilled:

Matthew 2:

- 5,6
- 15
- 16-18
- 23

Royal Travels:



From Bethlehem of Judea to Egypt



To just inside Israel



To Galilee of Israel

under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. 2:17 Then was **fulfilled** that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, 2:18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. 2:19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 2:20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. 2:21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. 2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called



To Nazareth of Israel.

Nazareth: that it might be **fulfilled** which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.



January 3

Ecclesiasticus 34:1,2

"Shadows & Winds"

[1] The hopes of a man void of understanding are vain, and false: and dreams lift up fools. [2] Who so regardeth dreams, is like him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind.

This passage deals with the uselessness of hopes, desires, dreams, wishes, and wants in a person who has no understanding. Have you ever seen a cat, for example, chase its own shadow? That creature can be determined and really go hard for it, but of course, the effort is futile.

Today, it's very popular for people to post on social media sayings about following their "dreams" and aspirations. Because the messages are so-called "positive", people swallow it up! But they never talk about how useless it is to pursue dreams that make no sense or that just could never happen. They don't say, "You can dream, hope, name, claim, speak, declare and decree all you want, but if someone doesn't DO SOMETHING, whatever your

dream may be, it will never happen."

Those who are "void of understanding" won't receive that most basic principal. They love to follow the blowing winds of deceptive dreams. They angrily label as "negative" anyone who tries to correct them. Their dreams lift them up and make them feel so good but this scriptural passage says "dreams lift up fools"!

Still, as in many scriptural accounts, the victim of a situation may only be able to take the situation to God in prayer and fasting, but it's God who will decide whether or not something more will be done to bring about a desired change.



January 4

Matthew 19:16-24

"Values & Priorities"

16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these

things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?
21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.
23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Think About It

☐ Jesus responded to a question. He said: Why are you calling me good. There's only one who is good and that's God. Some have interpreted this to mean Jesus was making an emphatic statement that no one was good. However, Job, for example, was said to have been "perfect and upright…" and Psalms 37:23 says the steps of a "good man" are ordered by the Lord. See Psalms 112, Proverbs 12…

Could Jesus have said that to mean, "either you're just trying to flatter me or since you're calling me good, you must be acknowledging me as one in authority and, if so, as such, you'll listen to and accept my counsel"? It may have been said sarcastically as Jesus detected his real motives.

☐ Why didn't Jesus list all of the 10 command-

ments? Why were only 5 of the 10 and one of the "two great commandments" mentioned? Was this an error in translation? Where there only 6 commandments originally? (Exodus 20). Did Jesus simply do an overview of the commandments to save time? Was Jesus saying only what the man needed to hear? Does it just depend on where this story is read? (Mark 10:17-22 and Luke 18:18-23).

☐ Was the main point of the account that sometimes people miss the main point of life, and more importantly, the value of a good after-life?

☐ Was Jesus demonstrating that some people won't let go of earthly stuff in exchange for heavenly treasure? Was Jesus anti-rich people? Was he, instead, showing that though some (regardless to the culture or time in history) may know the protocol of saying the right things to the right people, but, in fact, do not know what is truly valuable—that they have wrong priorities?



January 5

Isaiah 55:8,9

"Thoughts & Ways"

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your

ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Best-Ever Reminder!

God's thoughts and ways are NOT human. God's thoughts and ways are *not even close* to those of human beings. There is an extremely vast gulf of difference in how the Creator thinks and behaves and how the Creator's creations, humans, think and behave.

To fully grasp this may be among the most important and needful concepts ever for humankind. We are not, nor will ever be, nor will ever think exactly as the LORD. Neither our "thoughts" nor our "ways" will ever be exactly as God's. We are not even close.

Regardless to the "you are gods", "build your self-esteem", "create your own reality" philosophies which are being crammed down the throats of people (especially in Westernized cultures) we, again, are not God and can never be God. Seeing everything through that understanding would greatly enhance our present lives and eternal futures.

January 6

1 Samuel 17:1-54

"David & Goliath"

Outline:

a. Goliath challenges 17:1-11

b. David's curiosity 17:12-27

c. David's confidence 17:28-39

d. David's victory 17:40-54

A significant point in the account of David and Goliath is that things aren't always as they appear. The oldest, strongest, biggest, richest, most popular, most attractive, best speaker, singer, etc... may not be the one who has the faith, courage, and love for the Living God to do what is needed. God may not choose those that humans may choose.

January 7

Ecclesiasticus 27:4

"Trash Detection"

As when one sifteth with a sieve, the refuse remaineth, so the filth of man and his talk.

When one filters (separates & carefully examines) all the hoopla—all of the fanciful & lofty words, exaggerated accounts, and grandiose talking of a person, the filth (vulgar, foolishness, warped and/or wicked thinking) is left to be revealed for what it is. This verse is about actively listening. It's wisdom regarding discernment of what people say as opposed to what they are really thinking and feeling.

Here, we have a simile of sifting, for example, flour. Using a mesh, hand-held sifter, I shake the culinary utensil, which has been filled with cooking flour. Back and forth I shake it and, as I do, a thinner amount of flour drops beneath the shifter. However, not all of the flour falls. Lumpy bits of flour stay in the sifter. In cooking, that portion is considered inedible; it's the bad part. That "refuse" remains.

That's "the filth" of a person's words. It just stays there. It's through careful listening—listening with spiritual ears, that one is able to separate good from bad. For true Believers, the Holy Spirit is the sifter. The Spirit of God guides in finding truth in what's being heard.

January 8

Revelation 20:1-5

"The 1st Resurrection"

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and

judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Just Questions:

□ How many resurrections are there?

□ When Jesus was killed and rose from his burial place, 3 days later, what "resurrection" was that?

□ What's the real meanings of the beast and its mark or image, the dragon, that old serpent, the devil and Satan;

□ What's the meaning of the descending angel holding the key to a bottomless pit and a great chain?

□ Is it, in fact, a prophecy? Has this situation already happened or is it something that will occur later?

□ Will some dead will remain dead for a thousand years while some other dead will live again for the same thousand years?

January 9

2 Corinthians 11:4

"Another Gospel"

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

This is concern about the level of spiritual maturity, or lack of it altogether, regarding Believers of that day. It applies to this period of time as well. The writer was saying: I don't think you all really understand the seriousness of what's happening. I don't think you'll be able to overcome the treacherous tricks with which you may be faced. I'm afraid, for your sakes, that if someone approaches you with an anti-Christ message, you'll fall for it.

Emergent Church, Seeker Sensitive Movement, New-Age Theology... whatever the term, it's the same thing—another gospel, another Jesus, another spirit and it's all up in through the churches, even within so-called "mainstream Christian" churches.

Many places are not teaching or living biblical Christianity. They don't even *know* what the gospel *IS*, can't define it, do not share it, and definitely do not live it. These are the types of people who are extremely vulnerable to—another gospel.

January 10

Colossians 1:9-11

"A Prayer 4 U"

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I come on behalf of my sister (*name*). I pray that she be filled with the knowledge of Your will. Enlarge her, also, with wisdom and understanding. Guide her steps that she may way walk worthy of You. Lead her to paths which are pleasing to You. Let her actions be productive in every good way. Help her to know You better day by day. Strengthen her mightily, Lord, as only You can do by Your glorious power. Fortify her to the highest levels of patience, tolerance, and joyfulness. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

January 11

Ecclesiasticus 3:26

"Danger Lover"

A stubborn heart shall fare evil at the last, and he that loveth danger shall perish therein.

Stubbornness, a propensity for danger, and death (physical and/or spiritual) go hand-in-hand.

January 12

1 Peter 1:4,5

"Kept Through Faith"

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

How does the true Believer view salvation? It is an indestructible inheritance. Can it be ruined or could it disappear?

It is a guaranteed heavenly reservation. We know we are kept, not by our own power, but rather by the power of God through faith all the way to salvation.

January 13

Hebrews 10:38, 39

"Soul-saving Belief"

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw

back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. [39] But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

What does it mean to "draw back unto perdition"? In context to the rest of the passage, it means to go backward to the wrong understanding concerning eternal damnation vs. by-faith salvation.

Once you fully comprehend that there is absolutely NOTHING you can do to obtain eternal salvation, as Jesus said, it's impossible with men, you realize that it is only by faith that one is saved. Unfortunately, some people may semi-understand that but still waiver when they hear a strong message about hell vs. godly living. They "draw back" or mentally move in opposition to the faith message. They revert to their old ways of any number of works-based beliefs, especially mandatory church attendance and paying tithes.

What each of us has to ask ourselves and be certain of is do we draw back unto perdition (old, backward, oppressive, futile ways of living) or do we believe in Christ to the saving of our souls?



January 14

Romans 10:8, 9

"THE WORD of Faith"

[8] But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even

in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; [9] That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

This is "the word of faith"—not a charismatic denomination. The "word of faith" message is this:

If one confesses the Lord Jesus with one's mouth and believe, from one's heart, that God has raised Jesus from the dead, he or she will be eternally saved.

This is a powerful message of salvation. It also shows that no Bible is "the Word" or "the Word of God". THE WORD was preached concerning faith. THE WORD is any message of God and from God; never a Bible—regardless to the version.

January 15

Ephesians 2:8,9

"Grace & Faith Saved"

[8] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast. (AKJV, 1666/1769)

Perhaps this passage should be a major part of every Believer's arsenal of memory verses, solid beliefs, and constant reminders. Understanding of these verses will keep one

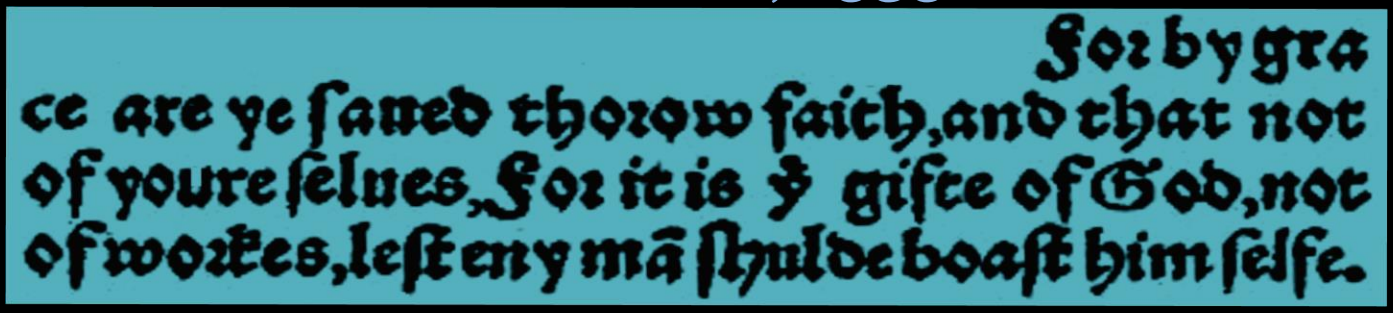
out of so much doctrinal error! Ephesians 2, verses 8 and 9 should be recited as frequently as kindergarteners should say their alphabets.

Matthew's Bible, 1537


For by grace are ye made safe thorowe fayth/and that not of youre selues. For it is the gyfte of God/and commeth not of workes/lest eny man shulde boost hym selfe.

For by grace are ye made safe through faith, and that not of yourselves. For it is the gift of God, and commeth not of works, lest any man should boast himself.

Coverdale, 1535


For by grace are ye saued thorow faith, and that not of youre selues, For it is ỳ gifte of God, not of workes, lest eny mā shulde boast hym selfe.

For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast himself.

Salvation is made available as a result of God's grace. God's grace and one's faith makes a

connection. **Salvation**, however, is not "of yourselves". It is not something you have done. It is the GIFT of God. Because salvation is "not of works", no person can boast that they have earned it.

January 16

Genesis, chapters **6-8**

"Noah & the Flood"

Chapter 6 ...**Make thee an ark** of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch...

Chapter 7 ...[2] **Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.** [3] Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. [4] For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth **forty days and forty nights**; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. [5] And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. [6] And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth...

Chapter 8 ...[6] And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: [7] And he sent forth **a raven**, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. [8] Also he sent forth **a dove** from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the

ground; [9] But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth...

What might be the reason there were far more "clean" creatures than "not clean" (unclean) creatures on the ark?

What was another major event that occurred in Scripture for 40 days?

Would a loving God really destroy the whole earth and nearly all His own creations that He, Himself, created? Why?

Does this account tell us anything about earth and how long it has existed?



January 17

2 Esdras 8:3

"Creation & Salvation"

There be many created, but few shall be saved.

MANY vs. FEW

is a

repeated theme

throughout the scriptures.

January 18

Susanna 1:22, 23

"Choice: Best of Worst"

22 Then Susanna sighed, and said, I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing, it is death unto me: and if I do it not I cannot escape your hands. 23 It is better for me to fall into your hands, and not do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.

This is how a true Believer sometimes reasons within himself or herself when faced with dire, seemingly no-win situations. S/he has to decide who is to be sided with and who is to be sided against. When set up and falsely accused, Susanna basically said, "I'm in a really bad situation. I'm doomed if I do and doomed if I don't. Though I'll end up dying, it's still better to take the side of not doing something against God. It's better to be killed by you than to sin".

January 19

Bel and the Dragon 1:3-5

"You Gotta' Serve Somebody"

3 Now the Babylons had an idol, called Bel, and there were spent upon him every day twelve great measures of fine flour, and forty sheep, and six vessels of wine. 4 And the

king worshipped it and went daily to adore it: but Daniel worshipped his own God. And the king said unto him, Why dost not thou worship Bel? [5] Who answered and said, Because I may not worship idols made with hands, but the living God, who hath created the heaven and the earth, and hath sovereignty over all flesh.

The king of that time, and it has been reported that many national leaders of our time, worship Baal. This king worshipped and adored this idol every single day. However, Daniel chose to only worship the Living God.

It really seems strange to me that there are people who actually worship hand-made idols. I can understand one really appreciating a work of art, for example, but to go as far as to worship, to bow down to, and pray to anything that is made from materials is so bizarre to me.

Nonetheless, whether it be a thing, person, or place, many do commonly idolize and worship someone or something which is not God. Even people who claim to be non-religious can be found worshipping careers, celebrities, possessions, hobbies, and even mates, children, and pets.

Maybe the urge to worship is built into the nature of humans. Perhaps, the words of an old secular song says are true, “It might be the devil or it might be the Lord, but you gotta’ serve somebody”.

Just as Daniel believed and practiced, the Believer’s choice should always be to serve “the living God” who has created the heaven and the earth, and has control over all creatures which are made of flesh.

January 20

2 Maccabees 1:24-29

“Prayer to the Creator of All Things”

24 And the prayer was after this manner; O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things, who art fearful and strong, and righteous, and merciful, and the only and gracious King, 25 The only giver of all things, the only just, almighty, and everlasting, thou that deliverest Israel from all trouble, and didst choose the fathers, and sanctify them: 26 Receive the sacrifice for thy whole people Israel, and preserve thine own portion, and sanctify it. 27 Gather those together that are scattered from us, deliver them that serve among the heathen, look upon them that are despised and abhorred, and let the heathen know that thou art our God. 28 Punish them that

oppress us, and with pride do us wrong. [29] Plant thy people again in thy holy place, as Moses hath spoken.

This is a wonderful prayer for unity among the true people of Israel.

January 21

Ecclesiasticus 42:17-21

"Declare!"

(1611KJV) [17] The Lord hath ~~not~~ given power to the saints to declare all his marvelous works, which the Almighty Lord firmly settled, that whatsoever is, might be established for his glory. [18] He seeketh out the deep and the heart, and considereth their crafty devices: for the Lord knoweth all that may be known, and he beholdeth the signs of the world. [19] He declareth the things that are past, and for to come, and revealeth the steps of hidden things. [20] No thought escapeth him, neither any word is hidden from him. [21] He hath garnished the excellent works of his wisdom, and he is from everlasting to everlasting, unto him may nothing be added, neither can he be diminished, and he hath no need of any counselor.

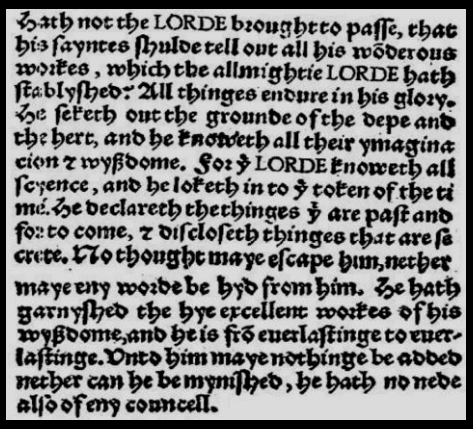
Question:

Why is there a strikethrough on the word "not"?

Answer:

There is a significant discrepancy between the 1611 and earlier versions concerning this verse. The 1611

is in the negative (God has NOT...) whereas all earlier English versions are in the affirmative (God has...). See: Geneva, 1560; Great Bible, 1540; Coverdale, 1535.


Hath not the LORDE brought to passe, that his sayntes shulde tell out all his wōderous workes, which the allmightie LORDE hath stablyshed? All thinges endure in his glory. He seketh out the grounde of the depe and the hert, and he knoweth all their ymaginacion & wysdome. For ỳ LORDE knoweth all scyence, and he loketh in to ỳ token of the tim̄e. He declareth the thinges ỳ are past and for to come, & discloseth thinges that are secrete. No thought maye escape him, neither maye eny worde be hyd from him. He hath garnyshed the hye excellent workes of his wysdome, and he is frō everlastinge to everlastinge. Unto him maye nothinge be added nether can he be mynished, he hath no nede also of eny councell.

Hath not the LORD brought to pass, that his saints should tell out all his wonderous works, which the almighty LORD hath stablished? All things endure in his glory. He setteth out the ground of the deep and the heart, and he knoweth all their imagination and wisdom. For the LORD knoweth all science, and looketh into the token of the time. He declareth the things that are past and for to come, and discloseth things that are secret. No thought may escape him, neither may any word be hid from him. He hath garnished the high excellent works of his wisdom, and he is from everlasting to everlasting. Unto him may nothing be added neither can he be minished, he hath no need also of any councel.

Great Bible, 1540 (verse 17)

Hath not the Lord brought to pass, and his saints should tell out all his wonderous works, which the Almighty Lord hath stablished? All things endure in his glory.

Geneva, 1560 (verse 17)

Hath not the Lord appointed that his Saints should declare all his wonderous works, which the almighty Lord hath stablished to confirm all things by in his majesty?

Clarification:

From the 1611 KJV, I initially interpreted the passage to mean God has NOT given the ability to declare God's marvelous works the saints. I did so because the 1611 states, "**The Lord hath not given power to the saints to declare all his marvelous works…**" I thought, "Maybe God wants to make known all His amazing works Himself or maybe he prevents his saints from declaring his works so that only He will receive glory."

By the grace of God, however, I was lead to a clearer, more contextual, and much more reasonable understanding. It's plain, throughout Scripture and in modern daily life that God DOES allow the saints to declare his works. That's what we do… or should be doing. That's a part of spreading the gospel message—telling about God and how He sent His Son to save us all from inherited sin. That's a marvelous work! We certainly may declare it!

Nonetheless, the 1611 plainly says the Lord has NOT given power to the saints to declare all his marvelous works. Does it mean the saints can only declare

SOME, but not ALL? Does it mean the saints overstep God's authority when they declare God's glory? That would really be ridiculous. So we have to dig deeper.

As I sought the Lord for help in understanding this, I found myself looking at even older versions. It was the Great Bible that spelled out things better when it showed that part of the verse was a question rather than a statement.

"Hath not the Lord…?," as opposed to "The Lord hath not…" changes the meaning greatly. The older versions' writing was a rhetorical question used as a matter of emphasis. It's similar to saying, "Is grass not green? Is the sun not bright? Is water not wet?" Obviously you can't logically turn those questions around and make them statements such as, "Grass is not green." or "The sun is not bright…" But that's what I think may have happened with at least one copy of the 1611 KJV translation. It appears that when the translator(s) switched from question to statement, the "not" was mistakenly kept, thereby completely reversing the original meaning.

Why So Much About This One Passage?

Naturally, I wanted to understand this passage as I desire to understand all of what is available and what is considered Scripture. However, I later discovered something of even greater importance. More and

more frequently, I am seeing the extreme value of having access to several biblical sources and the older, the better. Particularly when it comes to apocryphal books, my understanding has been strengthened by utilizing older versions. I am also learning that it is intensely crucial to readily hear the Holy Spirit's guidance and to take heed HOW I hear (Luke 8:18).

Further, this is yet another very apparent example of how no single Bible version could possibly be "God's Word" (as in *everything* written is directly from God). I'm definitely not saying much can't be gained from reading and receiving Scripture. But we must stay mindful that Bible versions, even Textus Receptus translations, are versions of another writing and, as such, have the potential for various issues. We need to know that all Scripture must be "rightly divided" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Finally, I am reminded that when hearing what we believe to be Scripture, with or without the books of the Apocrypha, we must come in the correct spirit. We cannot come to God's messages for His people with a wrong approach such as brooding or worrying about other issues, disinterest, hypocrisy, or with egotism such as an "I already know that" attitude. If we put up blocks, we'll be blocked. The seed will not fall on good ground and it will not grow. Therefore,

we will not grow. We must come "as little children" and be willing to go in whatever direction the Holy Spirit takes us—even when that way is unconventional.

So, Yes! Go Ahead.
Tell it! **Declare** it!
The Lord HAS, indeed,
given power to the saints
to declare
all his marvelous works...!

January 22

Ecclesiasticus 23:15

"Common Filth"

The man that is accustomed to opprobrious words, will never be reformed all the days of his life.

opprobrious: *abusive, derogatory, outrageously disgraceful or shameful; words or behavior that is contemptuous, damaging, defamatory, despicable, humiliating, injurious.*

When a person becomes very comfortable using filthy, profane language and/or actions, it's hard, if not impossible, for them to change from it. They often don't see a need to "be reformed" because they're okay with their words and actions. Many don't even know, for example, that they're cursing and it's nearly pointless to tell them. They are usually

oblivious to what they're saying or, the opposite is the case in which they are defensive and may intentionally become more vulgar.

There are many social environments in North America, including schools for children, where usage of profane speaking is allowed and even encouraged particularly outside of classrooms. The reatly definitely pushes vulgarity. I've been on jobs where talk about religion, specifically Christianity, was frowned upon or was even forbidden. Profanity, however, was very much allowed and freely used.

There's a possibility that an evil spirit makes some people so ratchet-nasty in their behavior and speech. Whether the reason is due to prolonged wicked physical influences (being around bad-acting people) or that of a spiritual nature (evil spirits), or both, the end result for any who are past a certain point, is that there is no chance of correction. See Romans 1:28-32 "...reprobate mind...".

Sometimes people deliberately try to learn how to use profanity so they will be more popular. Regardless the reason, the result is not good when people practice common filth and they will discover that it is harder to stop than it was to start.

January 23

Ecclesiasticus 2:1-3

“Preparation for Temptation”

1 My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation. 2 Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure, and make not haste in time of trouble. 3 Cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayest be increased at thy last end.

Count the cost. Plan and calculate situations before they actually occur. Sons as well as daughters need to be ready to deal with temptation. Maybe because many parents or “religious leaders”, themselves, don’t know, too many children aren’t taught this.

When you start to follow Christ, don’t expect all pleasantness. Have a definitive plan on how you will respond to challenges which are common to Believers. Prepare to be tempted hard and don’t go the wrong way. Make up your mind to endure great difficulties. Don’t rush into decisions during stressful times. Stick tightly to God. Despite how things may appear and feel, believe situations will work out for your ultimate well-being in the end.

Like an educational course, this is a 101 (prerequisite) for Christian living. It’s a major

and most needful instruction in having a clean and productive godly life where one avoids so many of the pitfalls, set-ups, and snares which are set for Believers. New Believers and young people are particularly vulnerable to the tempting traps of the world.

January 24

Revelation 22:16,17
"Come"

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

This is Jesus talking:
I have sent my angel to be a witness of these things in the churches. I am the "root and the offspring of David". I am the "bright and morning star". The Spirit (of God) and the bride (presently interpreted as the true church) are saying to come. If

you're listening and you're thirsty, you say it too. You come and tell others to COME. Whomever will, do COME and take the water of life freely.

January 25

Psalms 80:3,18,19
"Turn Us Again & Shine"

[3] Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. [18] So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. [19] Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

It's really good to read verses 1-19, but these three get right to the point. This is a prayer of one who sought God's forgiveness and restoration. It can be a united prayer guide during difficult times:

LORD, please turn us back to where we should be—back to where we loved, revered, and worshipped you from pure hearts. If you would do that, we would be saved from this mess and we won't keep going backward. Revive us and we'll put our trust in You. Oh LORD, bring us back into Your favor and delight and we will be saved.

January 26

Ecclesiasticus 39:1-3

"Pursuing the Law of the Most High"

1 But he that giveth his mind to the law of the most high, and is occupied in the meditation thereof, will seek out the wisdom of all the ancient, and be occupied in prophecies. 2 He will keep the sayings of the renowned men: and where subtle parables are, he will be there also. 3 He will seek out the secrets of grave sentences, and be conversant in dark parables.

- Are you *really* into the deeper things of God?
- Do you submit your mind to the law of the most High and stay busy in its meditations?
- Do you search for historical wisdom from former generations?
- Have you tried to follow the sayings of truly successful (in godliness) people?
- Are you busy contemplating prophecies?
- Do you research to try to find the hidden meanings of deep and spiritual quotations?
- Are you able to hold intelligent conversations about dark parables?

January 27

Romans 9:4, 30-33

"Who Are Israelites?"

4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

What's being an "Israelite"? When it comes to eternal adoption, when it comes to the glory and the covenants, where we speak of the giving of the law, the service of god, and God's promises, who is an Israelite?

Though they did not pursue righteousness by the law, the Gentiles obtained righteousness. How? They reached it by faith. It is the righteousness of faith. So, those who pursue righteousness by faith are, at least a *kind of* Israelite (regardless to

physical lineage) and, indeed, that is a "stumblingstone" (verse 32) for those who put their hope of favor from God or salvation in works or in ancestry.

January 28

Acts 9:36-42

"Dead? Not Dead?"

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. 42 And it was known

throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

THINK ON IT

There are really amazing accounts of miracles in scriptures like this one—from living to dead to living again. Not often, if ever, seeing such incidents in modern times, what might we conclude? What may be the purpose for having, hearing, or reading such retellings?



January 29

1 Kings 18:21-39

"Between Two Beliefs"

21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How **long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.** And the people answered him not a word. 22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. 23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: 24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. 25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your

gods, but put no fire under. [26] And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. [27] And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. [28] And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. [29] And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. [30] And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. [31] And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: [32] And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. [33] And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. [34] And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. [35] And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the

trench also with water. [36] And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. [37] Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. [38] Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. [39] And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

Elijah challenged the people to pick and to stick to a side—God or Baal.

They were speechless, probably either from shame or from surprise at the audacity of someone so boldly going, shall we say, where no one had gone before.

People don't like having their beliefs challenged.

Elijah: I'm just one person in favor of the LORD, but there are 450 of Baal's prophets.

Let's put who's who of G/gods to a test.

The LORD is unequivocally proven to truly be God. Likewise, Baal was proven to be fake.

In current times, what does it take for people to firmly choose a side?

January 30

1 Kings 19:8-18

“Not Earth, Wind, or Fire!”

8 And he arose, and did
eat and drink, and went in
the strength of that meat
forty days and forty nights
unto Horeb the mount of
God. 9 And he came
thither unto a cave, and
lodged there; and, behold,
the word of the LORD
came to him, and he said
unto him, What doest thou
here, Elijah? 10 And he
said, I have been very
jealous for the LORD God
of hosts: for the children
of Israel have forsaken thy
covenant, thrown down
thine altars, and slain thy
prophets with the sword;
and I, even I only, am left;
and they seek my life, to
take it away. 11 And he
said, Go forth, and stand
upon the mount before the
LORD. And, behold, the
LORD passed by, and a
great and strong wind rent
the mountains, and brake
in pieces the rocks before
the LORD; but the LORD
was not in the wind: and
after the wind an
earthquake; but the LORD
was not in the earthquake:
12 And after the
earthquake a fire; but the
LORD was not in the fire:
and after the fire a still
small voice. 13 And it was
so, when Elijah heard it,
that he wrapped his face
in his mantle, and went
out, and stood in the
entering in of the cave.
And, behold, there came a
voice unto him, and said,
What doest thou here,
Elijah? 14 And he said, I
have been very jealous for
the LORD God of hosts:
because the children of
Israel have forsaken thy
covenant, thrown down
thine altars, and slain thy
prophets with the sword;
and I, even I only, am left;
and they seek my life, to
take it away. 15 And the
LORD said unto him, Go,
return on thy way to the

wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: [16] And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. [17] And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. [18] Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

FOR DEEPER THINKING

The LORD was not in the wind. The LORD was not in the earthquake. The LORD was not in the fire. The LORD was, instead, in a still, small voice—motionless and quiet voice.

In our lives, is the LORD sometimes found in the non-sensationalized situations? Is correct information found on the obscured and downplayed or little-known websites or video accounts?

What might be various Baal-types of our time?

Are there world leaders, celebrities, etc. to whom people bow or too highly revere?

Are there any in these times who have not bowed to or kissed a modern-day Baal?

Who are the Elijah-types of our day?

January 31

John 2:1-11

"Water To Wine: A Useful Message or a Waste of Time?"

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: 2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

For Thought:
The Point?

✓ What's the point? Is the purpose of the passage to say Jesus was pro-wine or encouraged drinking? Was *that* wine alcoholic? Did Jesus drink wine?
✓ Is the importance of this that Jesus could call his mother "woman"?
✓ Does this show that Jesus was just different because he served good wine last and not first, as most, according to the passages, did?
✓ Was the primary point that people believed in him because he could instantly turn water into wine?
✓ Would witnessing water-to-wine-making turn non-believers into Believers?
✓ Was this account to tell that Jesus had special powers, that his mother knew about, even when Jesus was young?
✓ Was there a significance in the occasion being held on the "third" day?
✓ Was this recorded to promote marriage?
✓ Jesus' mother was a wedding guest, so why was she concerned about wine and was directing servants? Was she part of the wedding party?
✓ During this event, what did Jesus mean by saying, "my hour is not yet come"?

February 1

Mark 7:1-13

“Tradition! The Word of God?”

1 Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. 2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the command-ments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like

things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Jesus said they were hypocrites. He described their prophesied hypocritical behavior: By you, I'm lip-honored but heart-rejected. You are vain worshippers. You turn man-made rules and cultural traditions into doctrines. Meanwhile, you disregard God's commandments. Your actions negate **God's Word** (what God said—not any book or version).

Jesus sternly called out religious leaders of his day. Is it any wonder he was hated and was ultimately killed? How do you suppose True Followers of the teachings and examples of Jesus were, are, and will be treated?

February 2

Matthew 16:24, 25

"Losing Life — Finding Life"

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

For years, those were words. They were nice words and words to be repeated and remembered. They were not, however, words I understood, at least as well as I do now. In light of the quickly declining political climate in America and all over the world, I'm beginning to see these words in a more realistic, RIGHT NOW way.

In past history and presently, especially in countries where there is overt persecution of true Believers, people are faced with losing their physical lives for the sake of Christ (finding true life).

If/when the time comes, would/will You have all your possessions taken, be jailed, or killed in order to be faithful to Christ? Are you willing to be separated from your spouse, parents, children, or friends to "find life"? Would you

literally lose your physical life for Christ's sake in order to find true life in eternity with him? Would you accept a mark, chip, or any device implanted into your head or hand, for example, to avoid being financially destitute or physically imprisoned?

What's the farthest you would go to maintain the ability to function in this world? Would you openly reject Christ to continue earthly survival? These are the choices many have had, do have, and will, in the future, have in connection with the principle of finding life and losing life.

These aren't fictitious or conspiracy-theorist concepts. They aren't light decisions either. In some places, they are having to be made at this very moment in various places of the world. Decision regarding finding and losing life are permanent and eternal.



February 3

Ecclesiasticus 34:4

"Moral Absolutes"

Of an unclean thing, what can be cleansed? and from that thing which is false, what truth can come?

Historically and also in modern times, it's very

unpopular to take a definitive side, but the writer of this passage didn't have any issues with doing so. The question was asked: Can you really get something clean from something that's filthy or truth from something that's false?

Clean vs. unclean and true vs. false are moral absolutes. They are clearly opposing ideas and few will communicate or behave within that framework. Many try to straddle the fence and avoid being too firm about anything so they won't be categorized as something "negative" such as being closed-minded, narrow-minded, bigots, old-fashioned, intolerant, or hate criminals.

It's interesting that many of the people who use such condescending and derogatory terms to attack others—in judgment of others, are the same ones who scream they don't want to be judged. Some even say, "nobody but God can judge me". They don't want to be judged, yet they certainly don't mind judging, labeling, and stereotyping others.

Absolutes possibly exist within everyone, but not all absolutes are moral. There is always the battle of truth vs. untruth and clean vs. unclean.

February 4

Ecclesiasticus 35:20

"Mercy"

Mercy is seasonable in the time of affliction, as clouds of rain in the time of drought.

I think all versions work here but I'd say the older two, 1535 & 1540 (which are the same), speak more clearly and express more passionately the nature of God's mercy.

"Mercy is seasonable" (1611), to me, says mercy is *expected*. It is the right thing at a routine time. It's similar to saying cold weather is seasonable for winter time—nothing unusual; it's just the way things go. That's okay, but the older versions seem to present mercy as being welcomed and refreshing but not necessarily expected.

What a beautiful thing mercy is in time of anguish and trouble! It's like a cloud of rain that comes during a long time of dryness.

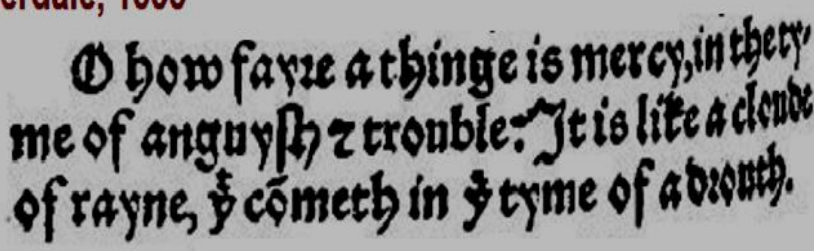
You hope for rain. You know you need it. You even

pray for it, but you don't know when rain will come during a time of severe dry weather conditions.

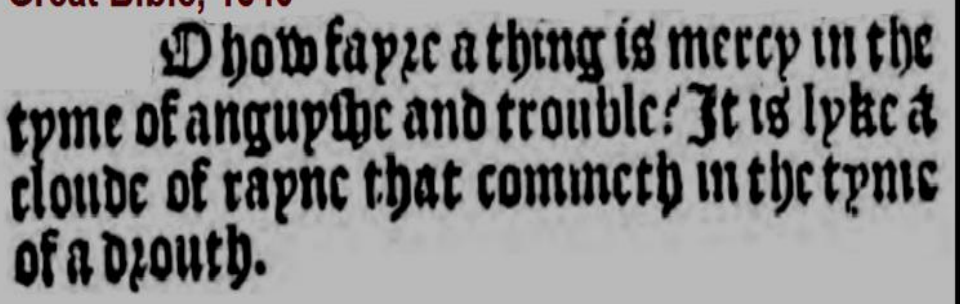
If "seasonable" is used as suitable or fitting, that's fine, but if used as "seasonal", that's less helpful.

O how fair a thing is mercy in the time of anguish and trouble. It is like a cloud of rain that cometh in the time of a drought.

Coverdale, 1535


O how fayre a thinge is mercy, in the tyme of anguysh & trouble: It is like a cloude of rayne, yͭ cõmeth in yͭ tyme of a drouth.

Great Bible, 1540


O how fayre a thing is mercy in the tyme of anguyshe and trouble: It is lyke a cloude of rayne that commeth in the tyme of a drouth.

Definitions:

<u>SEASONABLE</u>:

1) Typical of or suitable for the season of the time of year.

2) Occurring or performed at a suitable or proper time; opportune.

3) Occurring in good time, in due season, or in proper time for the purpose or season; timely.

<u>FAIR</u>: beautiful; of a pleasing appearance; with a pure and fresh quality.

I'm not saying there's a major discrepancy here. I just

feel the 2 sentences in the older versions say it more plainly than the 1611's shortened 1 sentence which uses "**seasonable**" rather than "**fair**", and "**affliction**" rather than "**anguish and trouble**".

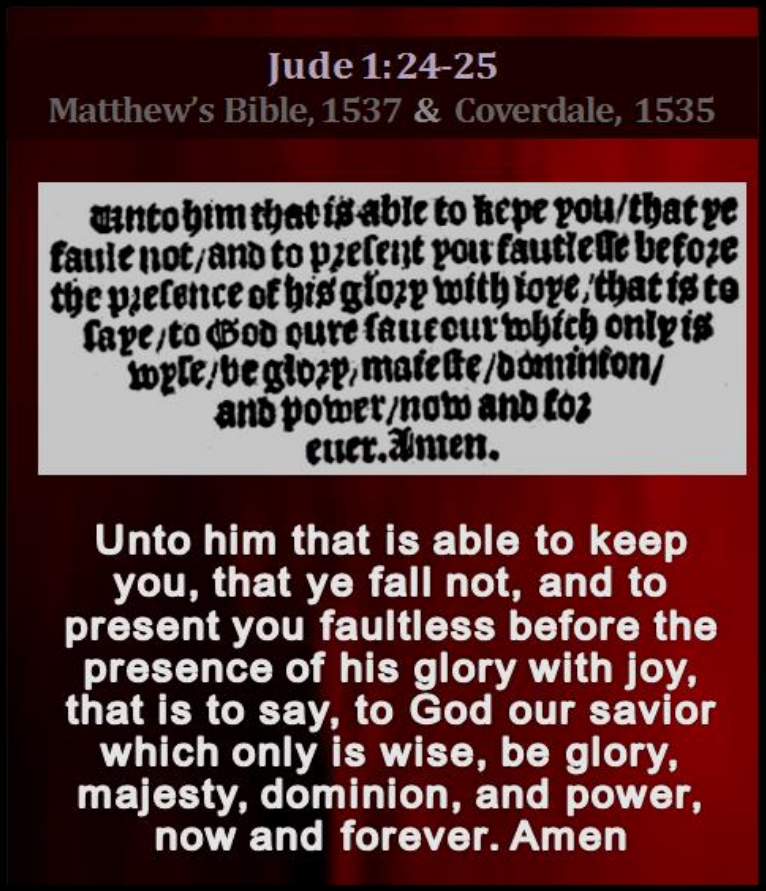
February 5

Jude 1:24, 25

"Keep You, Present You"

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

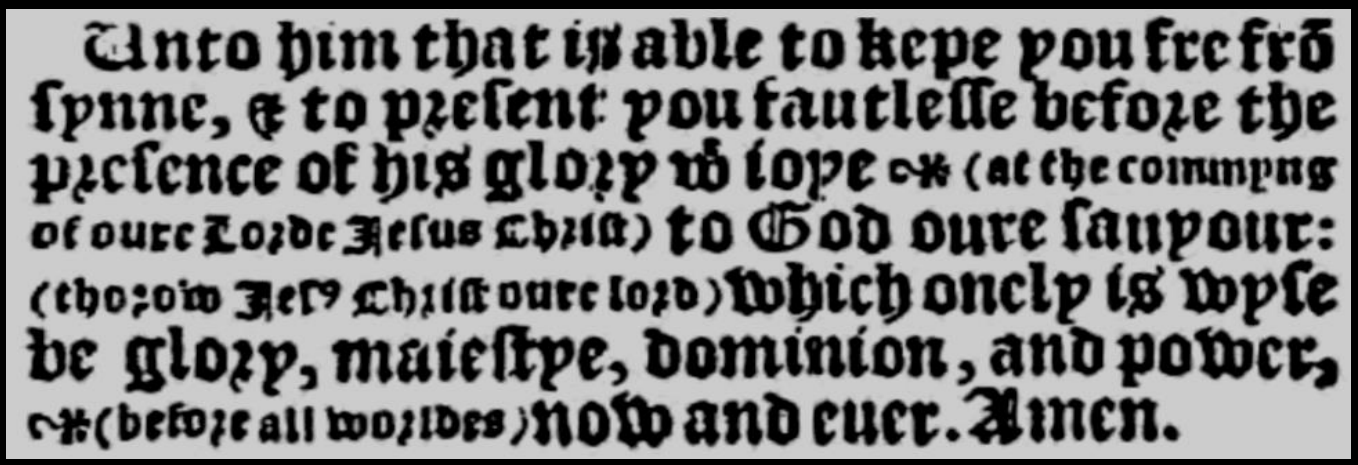
(AKJV, 1666/1769)



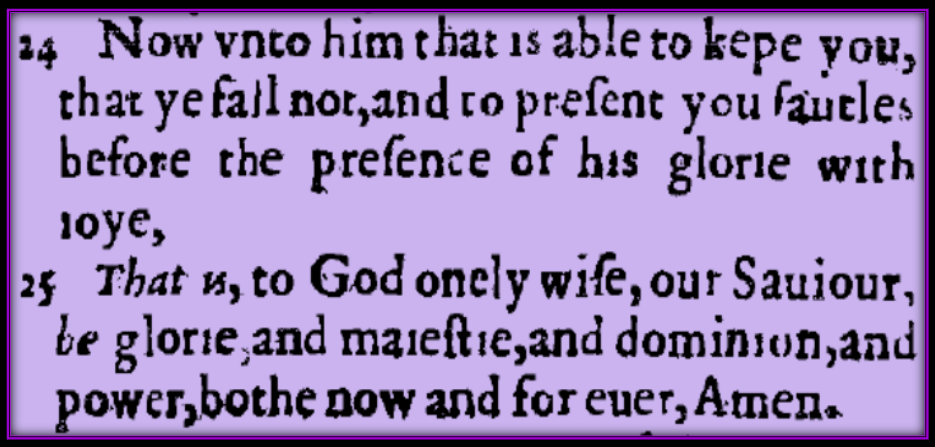
Interestingly, none of the earlier versions, prior to the 1611 KJV, say "*exceeding*" joy.

Further, the Great Bible of 1540 says, "to keep you **free from sin**..."

rather than “to keep you from falling”
and has other words in parenthesis i.e.
“at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”,
“through Jesus Christ our Lord” and
“before all worlds”.


Unto him that is able to kepe you fre frō
synne, & to present you fautlesse before the
presence of his glory w̄ ioye & (at the comming
of oure Lorde Iesus Christ) to God oure saupour:
(thorow Iesu Christ oure lorde) which onely is wyse
be glory, maiestye, dominion, and power,
& (before all worldes) now and euer. Amen.

Geneva, 1560

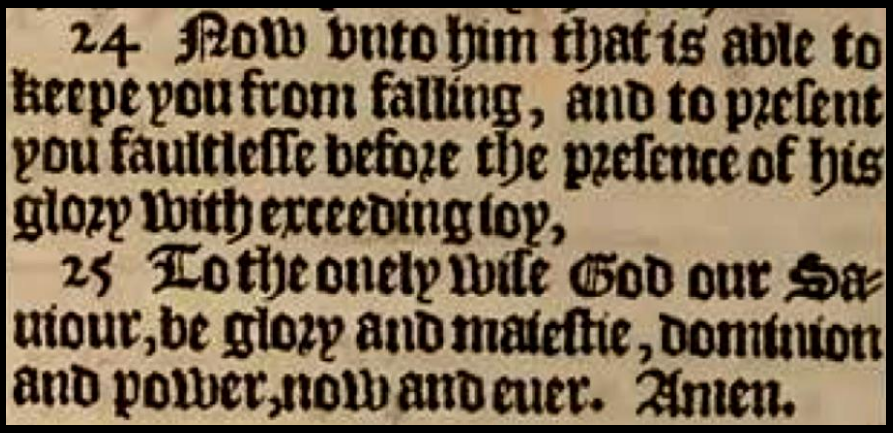

24 Now vnto him that is able to kepe you,
that ye fall not, and to preſent you ſautles
before the preſence of his glorie with
ioye,
25 That is, to God onely wiſe, our Sauiour,
be glorie, and maieſtie, and dominion, and
power, bothe now and for euer, Amen.

Now unto him that is able to keep you, that ye fall not, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with joy, That is, to God only wise, our savior, be glory, and majesty, and dominion, and power, both now and forever, Amen.

1611 KJV

▶ “...keep you from falling...”

- "...**exceeding** joy..."
  - Some versions say, "now and forever" while others say, "**both** now and forever".


24 Now vnto him that is able to
keepe you from falling, and to present
you faultlesse before the presence of his
glory with exceeding ioy,
25 To the onely wise God our Sa-
uiour, be glory and maiestie, dominion
and power, now and euer. Amen.

February 6

Ecclesiasticus 37:29-31

"Greed's Consequence"



29 Be not unsatiable in any dainty thing: nor too greedy upon meats.
30 For excess of meats, bringeth sickness, and surfeiting will turn into choler. 31 By surfeiting have many perished, but he that taketh heed, prolongeth his life.

Unsatiable (insatiable): greedy, ravenous, unquenchable; the inability to satisfy a strong and continuous urge.

Surfeiting: An over abundant supply; excess. An immoderate indulgence of something.

Choler: Irritable, fussy; angry attitude or behavior.

Don't be greedy concerning what you ingest. That includes delicacies as well as regular foods because excess eating causes sicknesses.

Overeating also causes behavior issues such as irritability and anger issues. Greediness in eating has caused many to die but those who pay attention to warnings regarding overeating have extended life.

February 7

Colossians 3:2, 3
"Setting Affection?"

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

The idea of setting one's affection on things above rather than on things of earth, and being "dead" with a life which is "hidden with Christ in God" may not be easily understood . How can one have an affection for "things above" when one is bombarded by the cruel realities of "things on the earth"?

I used to think one would have to purposefully will one's mind to godliness and that was that. The Christian's life was hidden with Christ forever. He or she was "dead" and never to rise again. All the effects of the earth's influence

were permanently blocked.

In spiritual terms, fine, but we still exist in this world. If you are DEAD, you don't have a LIFE—hidden, or otherwise. So obviously this verse uses figurative language. It's spiritual and discernment is required.

This state of mind comes from an ongoing, willing submission to God. It's a frequent yielding. Mess up? Fess' up! Intentionally lie down self-will to God… again, and again, and again… Probably for most, if not for everyone, it's not a one-time fix. Just because you make a confession to God does not put you in some mental oblivion to the world and its ills.

In other words, you have to yield to God those things which are so important, so tempting, or so painful and leave it. Again… Again…



As with an old-fashioned alarm clock, you set it and let it do the ticking. Unlike phone clocks or those which are similar, those had to be reset once they wound down. Likewise, we have to keep setting our affection clocks. How often we need to reset and for what event will depend on our individual lives and levels of spiritual maturity.

February 8

2 Chronicles 7:14

"If My People..."

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

"If". Some have called the word "if" the biggest little word ever. With "if" there is always a condition to reach the objective. "If" is usually followed by "then". What happens if the "if" never occurs?

"My People". Who are God's people?

"Which are Called by My Name". What is that name?

"Shall Humble Themselves". What does a humbled people look like? What would they do to show humility to God's satisfaction?

"Pray". Is that individual prayer or collective prayer? What should God's people pray? How long? How often? By one's bedside? In a garden? Why do some people, even in churches, hold hands during prayer? Is that biblical or does it actually have its roots in very unbiblical practices? Who said to close one's eyes and bow

one's head to pray? What does God-honored prayer really mean?

"Seek My Face". What does this mean? Is it to try to find out what God looked like or to imagine a picture of Jesus? Is it to pursue God's will or approval?

"Turn From Their Wicked Ways". Can wicked people who only know wickedness turn from their wicked ways? Does the request imply the people know better but refuse to do better?

"Then Will I Hear From Heaven". Is God in heaven? Where is heaven? Does God not hear the prayers of his people when certain conditions are not met?

"Forgive Their Sin". Will God really excuse wrongdoing? What if his people keep sinning, will he keep forgiving? What if they don't forgive others, will he forgive them as long as they pray?

"Heal Their Land". In what way is land sick? Is it talking about crop failures? Is it crime and corruption? Is it referring to earthquakes, volcanoes, and other "natural" disasters? Does "land" refer to the landscape of their lives such as one's business or financial matters or personal relationships or even physical health?

Does this speak to present-day Believers or is it specifically for those people of that time and is merely recorded for historical purposes?

February 9

Hebrews 10:17

"Forgotten Wrongs"

And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Who wouldn't want God to never remember their sins and iniquities? Who would pass up a chance to have God forget their wrong thoughts and behaviors, right? Well, one may think that would be the case. For many, sadly it's not.

As a result of the mainstreaming of the theory of evolution in education, more and more do not believe God exists at all. However, if they do believe there is actually a God who is Creator, they have decided God has no need to forgive them since they have already forgiven themselves. That's what they have been taught—even in churches. Others believe they have no need for their wrongs to be forgotten since they feel they have done no wrong. Of the few who do acknowledge sin, they believe any wrongdoing is not their fault. After all, they "didn't ask to be here", as some commonly say.

What might happen if sins are never forgotten by God and are remembered on a real day—the day of judgment?

February 10

Romans 10:17

"Faith? Hear!"

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The word of God. Is that "the Bible"? If so, which one? Which Bible version is "the word of God"? What was "the word of God" before any version was written... or before the development of the English language... or before any language?

Might "the word of God" mean the messages and principles of God rather than any book or collection of books. Couldn't "the word of God" be God's actual words and spiritual guidelines and not copies of copies and translations of translations which have undergone so many changes over time? Couldn't "the word of God" be available for the deaf—those who cannot "hear", as it is not audible words, but rather a Spirit such as, "in the beginning was the Word"?

So then, faith is gained from hearing (even through sign language or even within one's mind) the teachings, instructions, and doctrines of God.

Where one hears the "traditions" of people, as Jesus said, the word of God is ineffective and faith in God does not come; it is not developed.

February 11

Proverbs 16:18

"End Result of Pride"

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

What is "pride" and a "haughty spirit"?

Following are words and phrases associated with both terms: self-centeredness, conceit, smugness, narcissism, arrogance, egotism, vanity, selfishness, self-righteousness, self-importance, snobbishness, full of oneself, puffed-up, stuck-up, overconfident, me-first, putting on airs and strutting like a peacock.

However, the opposite is humility.

Is anyone naturally humble or is the human heart, instead, permeated with pride? How can one develop humility? Many of us know fully what pride looks like because it is so common and is even encouraged, especially in westernized societies, but what does humility look like—its

characteristics?

Only Christ can bring about true humility within our lives. We can pretend for a while, but when certain situations present themselves, our real selves show. To see what humility looks like, let's consider an example:

A young, single man is in need of transportation primarily in order to travel to and from work. His old car recently stopped working and no public transportation is available to him. He goes to a car lot to find a vehicle that runs efficiently and is reasonably priced. Upon seeing a nice car that fits his specifications, the young man asks for information on purchasing it.

The car salesperson talks about how a bigger and more fashionable car, which is located nearby, would be better. He talks about the comfort and amenities. He says how, though it is a bit more pricey and not great on saving gas or the environment, co-workers and especially young women will be much more attracted to him in the larger, more shiny car. After patiently listening to the strong sales pitch, with a gentle smile, the young man politely says, "I want a car that is practical. Miles per gallon and functionality is most important to me. If I can also contribute to the betterment of the environment, that's great

as well. Thank you, but I need transportation to transport me, not to boost my importance or attractiveness to others. Can you tell me more on the one I asked about first please?"

That mentality and expression of humility completely shut down the representatives' efforts to appeal to pride. The young man showed by word and deed that he was humble and not prideful. He did not want to show off or to be built up by others.

Pride can be seen in different ways and situations. Likewise, humility is shown in a variety of ways. Humility allows Christ-like nature to be expressed even where differences exist. It is a showing of humility to give equal consideration to all people regardless to shade of skin, social, political, or financial standing, or abilities.

It's pride, not humility, which causes strife, animosity, or harm toward others based on such temporal states of being. It is pride which brings about falls and destruction.

Scripture does not say how long it will be from the time an act of pride and haughtiness is committed to the time of the fall and destruction. Often the downfall is spiritual, sometimes

natural, and sometimes both. When falls and destruction happen such long, long time from the occurrence of the act(s), people do not make the connection. They don't see the cause-and-effect relationship of their behavior. Even so, pride inevitably yields un-goodness. Pride? Scripture does not indicate it is in any way good. Pride simply is not a good thing.



February 12

Romans 8:31

"For or Against Us?"

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

This is another commonly misapplied Bible passage used to pump people up—to make them feel oh, so good.

It happens when people do not read prior to this single verse to learn to what "these things" refer. Many exclude the first part of the verse altogether, and start with, "If God be for us…" so they don't even know to find out what "these things" mean.



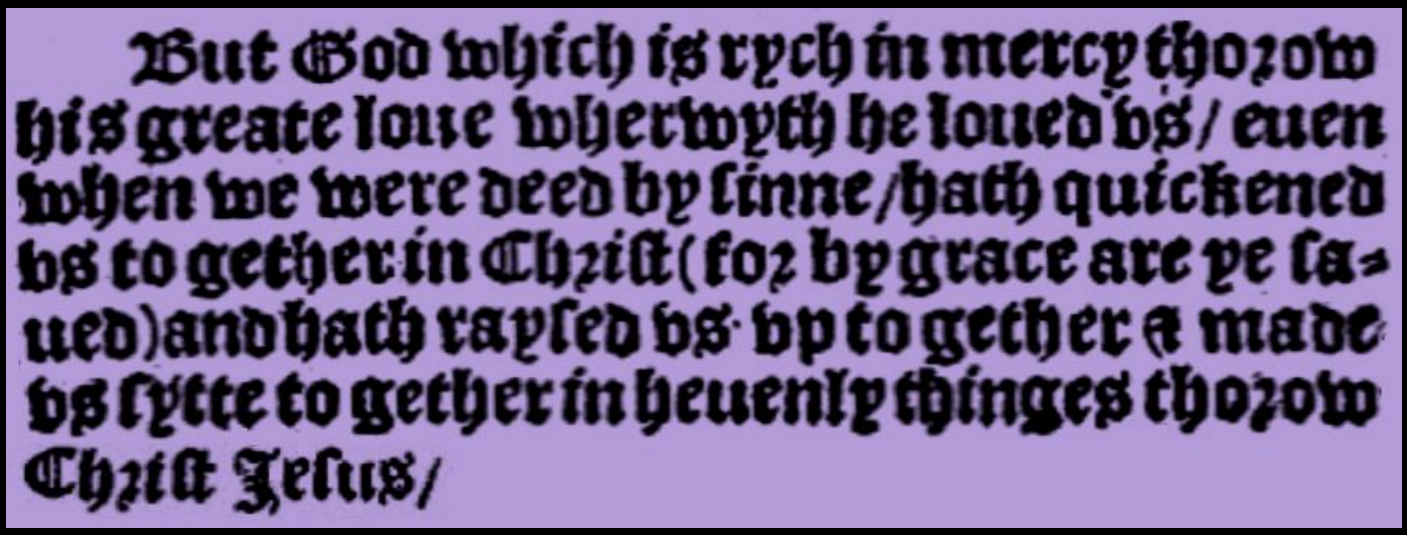
February 13

Ephesians 2:4-6

"Mercy-Rich"

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love

wherewith he loved us, [5] Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) [6] And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly **places** in Christ Jesus:


But God which is rych in mercy thorow his greate loue wherwyth he loued vs/ euen when we were deed by sinne/hath quickened vs together in Christ (for by grace are ye saued) and hath rayled vs vp together & made vs sytte together in heuenly thinges thorow Christ Iesus/

Matthew's Bible, 1537

But God which is rich in mercy through his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead by sin, hath quickened us together in Christ (for by grace are ye saved) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly things through Christ Jesus.

God is rich in mercy. He loves us with great love. Proof of his mercy and love is that when we were spiritually dead, as the result of sin, he revived us. He lifted and united us in Christ. God made it so that, through Messiah Jesus, we can be connected with Christ in things pertaining to heaven.

February 14

Ecclesiasticus 47:8,9

"Whole Heart Singing"

[8] In all his works he praised the holy one most High, with words of glory, with his whole heart he sung songs, and loved him that made him. [9] He set singers also before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs.

How does one praise God in all of one's works "with words of glory"? Think about that for a moment. Should our works and words glorify God? If we sing praises to "the holy one most High" shouldn't it be with our whole hearts?

We may look at and meditate on the phrases:

-Sweet melody -Daily sing praises

-All his works

-Whole heart -Loved Him that made him

February 15

John 13:4-17

"Deeper Meaning of Foot Washing"

[4] He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. [5] After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to

wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. [6] Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? [7] Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. [8] Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. [9] Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. [10] Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. [11] For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. [12] So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? [13] Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. [14] If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. [16] Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. [17] If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

So, what is the deeper meaning of foot washing? From these words of Jesus, we can see that he wanted Believers to have a certain

type of relationship with one another. He plainly stated, the foot washing was "an example" of how to behave with each other. We, true Believers, are to humble ourselves mutually. We are to understand that if he (the Messiah/the lord) could do it, we (servants) should also humble ourselves to the low degree of washing one another's feet.

The point was to show there should be no, as it's said, "Big I(s) and Little You(s)". It was to remind us that we are all his servants. We should not practice a lifestyle or culture of lordship over one another. Unfortunately, that message was not passed down in practice in mainstream so-called Christianity where there is, most commonly, the big preacher and little members; the high-and-mighty leaders vs. the lowly followers. And though few participate in physical foot-washing (usually yearly whenever done at all) most, if not all, tend to completely miss the underlying and intended message behind the practice. That is evident by the hierarchy and disunity shown throughout the rest of the year.

Nonetheless, biblical foot-washing symbolizes a commonality of brothers and sisters in Christ. It's much deeper than just doing *a*

thing for the New Year.

February 16

1 Timothy 2:1
"First of All"

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

What should be the first response to everything?
Pursuit, Prayer, Pleadings, Praise.

February 17

2 Corinthians 10:3-6
"The REAL War"

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

That the battles are unseen (spiritual) is an easily forgettable truth because we, humans, tend to act and react based on what is seen and

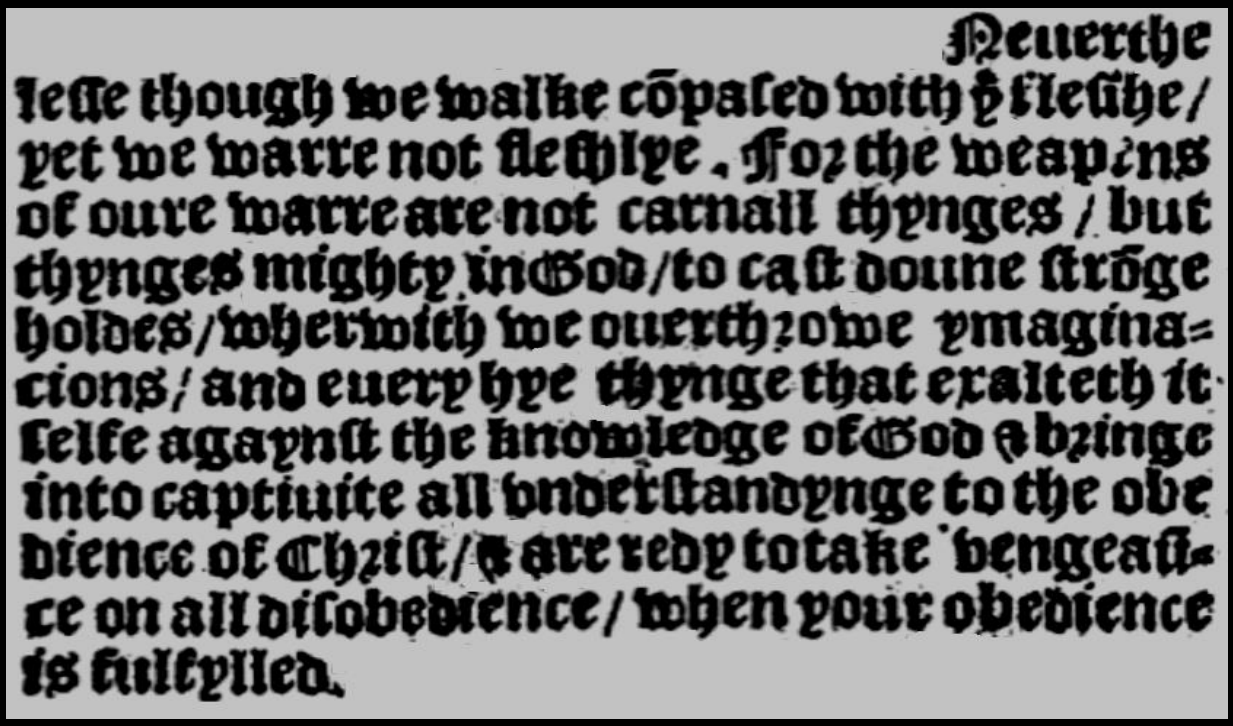
what is physically felt.

Believers need to stay mindful that our defense is not carnal. Carnal, as used here, indicates there is weakness since it is followed by “but mighty”. This passage puts flesh in the category of weakness and carnality.

CARNAL:
bodily, earthly, fleshly, impure,
wicked, lewd, immoral, lustful,
physical, sensuous, temporal,
unchaste, vulgar, worldly

Here’s the take-away.
Flesh is so weak that, though we live in physical form, *“though we walk in the flesh”*, there is no fight-power within our fleshly bodies.
Strength in the battle
is invisible/spiritual
and victory is firmly connected
to obedience.

The Matthew’s Bible version
may lead to a deeper interpretation.


Neuerthe
lesse though we walke cõpaled with ỹ flesshe/
yet we warre not fleshlye. For the weapõs
of oure warre are not carnall thynges/ but
thynges mighty in God/to cast doune ströge
holdes/wherwith we ouerthrowe ymagina-
cions/ and euery hye thynge that exalteth it
selfe agaynst the knowledge of God & bringe
into captiuite all vnderstandynge to the obe
dience of Christ/& are redy to take vengeaun-
ce on all disobedience/ when your obedience
is fulfylled.

Matthew's Bible, 1537

Nevertheless though we walk compassed with the flesh, yet we war not fleshly. For **the weapons of our war are not carnal things**, but things mighty in God, to cast down strongholds, wherewith we overthrow imaginations, and everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity all understanding to the obedience of Christ and are ready to take vengeance on all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

February 18

Jonah 2:9

"Vocal Sacrifice of Thanksgiving"

But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

We may make sacrifices to God and we may offer the giving of thanks vocally, but can the very act of giving thanks, itself, be a sacrifice to God?

When one does not FEEL like thanking God but does it anyway, it is a sacrifice. When a person verbally thanks and praises God against his or her own feelings of fatigue, frustration, questioning, or disinterest, it is a sacrifice. When you don't want to do something, but do it anyway, that's a sacrifice. When it seems to almost hurt to do a thing but you go ahead and do it, that's a sacrifice.

We are encouraged to thank and praise God openly, especially when things appear bleak, overwhelming, or even impossible.

During pleasant situations, some have said

they would praise God. That could be seen as a vow or firm agreement. With that in mind, we might understand Jonah's words better. He said he would pay that which he had vowed. He seems to have been referring to the sacrifice of vocal thanksgiving.

So, he thanked God, the God of salvation—the One capable of saving him from that fishy situation, even when he did not feel like doing so. That's a principle of godliness. It's a guide to deeper understanding. It shows that "the voice of thanksgiving"—even when we don't FEEL like it, can actually be an acceptable sacrifice to God. It can be a plea for deliverance, salvation... for help up and out of conditions that reach YHVH because, as it is written in this very verse, "salvation is of the LORD".

We may wish to meditate on the connection of sacrificial thanksgiving to God and God's divine deliverance and salvation—both on earth and even after this physical existence.



February 19

Ecclesiasticus 3:21-24

"Impaired Judgment"

21 Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength. 22 But what is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence, for it is not needful for thee, to see with thine eyes, the things that are in secret. 23 Be not curious in unnecessary matters: for more things are shewed unto thee, than men understand. 24 For many are deceived by their own vain opinion, and an evil suspicion hath overthrown their judgment.

"Stay in your lane", as the saying goes. Accept what is within your emotional and spiritual capabilities. Pursue what you're supposed to go after and appreciate "what is commanded thee" without trying to reach into things that are not for you.

Understand that you don't need to SEE certain secretive things. Don't be curious about "unnecessary matters" because you already know more than many people know.

Question: Why would restrictions be placed against potential intellectual advancement?

Answer: This passage indicates one's own vain opinion can lead to deception and faulty suspicions, in turn, lead to the breakdown of judgment, reasoning, or decision-making

abilities. That condition leads to one being overthrown (downfall, defeat, ruin).

In other words, delving into the wrong things—things which are not for you, can mess you up!

Consider the account of Adam and Eve. Though they had all the knowledge they needed, they were lead astray. Eve thought of the forbidden fruit as being useful "to make one wise". Hence, she started to reach for an area of knowledge that was not designed for her. The "evil suspicion" took root from the serpent's words that God was keeping something good from her. That premise lead to the type of thinking that, "God is against you". They went from that stage of deception to the final step—believing, embracing, and acting on twisted information which caused our fore-parents to be overthrown.

This is a warning for the purpose of protection rather than a prohibition against knowledge. As one really and truly values "**what is commanded thee**" (Scripture), one will come to "**think thereupon with reverence**". That, alone—thinking about and revering the things which are actually for you, will keep you occupied and will, spiritually speaking, prevent you from going off track. It will safeguard you from being

derailed. It will ultimately shield you from having your thought process and your ability to judge right from wrong overthrown.

Staying in your lane, so to speak, or more accurately, focusing on God and allowing the LORD to direct all your paths, including what you need to know, is a defence against impaired judgment.

February 20

2 Timothy 2:19-21

"Sure Foundation"

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Question: What is the "sure foundation"? Answer: The Lord knows those who belong to Him. It's most telling that while this passage, and others in Scripture, encourages the comfort and security

which is derived from faith in God, it immediately reminds of the importance of obedience to God.

In verse 19, we have the words, “foundation”, “sure” and “seal”. Those words are followed by a sentence which clearly promotes a sense of stability, “…the Lord knoweth them that are his.” But then, even within the same verse, we are reminded, *“…Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”* It's similar to saying, “Yes, you belong to God, but remember, as such, you will behave as if you really understand what naming the name of Christ actually means. You will SHOW that you know. You will exhibit a life that is grateful for Christ's sin-removing sacrifice by staying away from sin.”

Prior verses in this chapter, warn of the dangers of NOT departing from, or not purging oneself from INIQUITY. Verses 17 and 18 speak of two males who were not only in doctrinal error themselves, but caused others to lose faith in God.

Verse 21 gives the benefits of separating oneself from iniquity. You'll be honorable. You'll be set apart for a godly purpose. You'll be useful to God and ready to do “every good work”.

Though to some, it may seem to be so, it’s not a salvation-by-works passage. It’s actually a self-

check. You'll be able to see how serious you are about your walk with God by looking at your life in comparison to what it should be—a vessel which has been purged from the glitter and glamour or "gold and silver..."—that "great house" (broad way) of iniquity. That total-faith-in-God, separated from world-think, surrendered-to-God life and lifestyle is a solid and sure foundation.



February 21

2 Thessalonians 3

"Letter Re: Lazy Busybodies"

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know

how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. 13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. 14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all. 17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

2 Thessalonians is a letter from Paul to one

group of Believers during a time in history. Notice that this is not God speaking. No part of it is a promise or direct instruction from God. Further, it is not, nor can it ever be applicable to every congregation of Believers (either during the time it was first written or now). Yet, there are principles which may be relevant to present-day life.

The first and last parts of this letter consist of well-wishes, a request for prayer, desires, and general greetings and salutations. The body of the letter is basically about keeping oneself from the influence of lazy busybodies who don't work but, instead, start and stir mess among Believers. Look at the verses about separating from that type of behavior: "...**withdraw yourselves** from every brother that walketh disorderly..." (6), "...there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." (11) and, "... **note that man**, and **have no company with him**..." (14). However, verse 15 seems to flip the script in saying to, "...count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

So, how does one admonish a person "as a brother" from whom one has withdrawn oneself and with whom one has "no company"? How

would one separate from a lazy busybody "brother" (professing Christian) during a quarantine, or who is in a nursing home, in a prison, or in any instance whereby one were already isolated?

How do you have "no company" with a person who provides for your essential needs? How could a believing child have no company with a busybody parent? How could a believing wife withdraw herself from her disorderly husband? In cases where an older adult Believer is cared for by an adult child who is a false brother, how could this separation be effectively carried out?

Distancing from a wrong-doing professing Believer to teach him or her a lesson, *may* work within a group where the unruly person has no power or options, but obviously these instructions cannot be undergone in every situation. When, for example, a true Believer has already "come out from among them…" (2 Corinthians 6:17) and separated from the masses of ungodly pseudo-religious people, he or she does not have the ability to isolate anyone; that person has had to voluntarily isolate himself or herself.

Paul's instructions simply won't work practically in every situation. Nonetheless, the **principle** is

the point. That principle is to refuse to emotionally connect with someone who is causing chaos while misusing resources but not contributing. That is a good guideline.

Further, one may not be able to physically, or even financially, isolate from someone. Still, it may be prudent to at least attempt to emotionally and spiritually block an individual's influence over oneself when the behavior of another causes harm to one's mental and/or spiritual wellbeing.

Paul says there are "unreasonable and wicked" people and that not everyone has faith—not everyone is genuine. He acknowledges that there are "brothers" who are "disorderly", greedy, and lazy and who would eat someone else's food yet refuse to work. This is helpful for those who do not realize that just because a person SAYS they're "Christian" does not mean they are true followers of Christ's teachings and example.

From this Bible passage, we can see that even within congregations of Believers, not everything is ideal. We can also see the need to seek the Lord to "...direct your [*our*] hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ (5)". Dealing with lazy busybodies can really put one's patience to the test and depending on how

influential they are, they can, to some measure, take one's mind off of Christ. That's quite serious.

February 22

Revelation 2:2-4

"Works, Patience, Testing, and 1st Love"

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Questions & For Thought

What is this, and the other writings to the churches, really about? Is it a message to only those particular churches it mentioned? Is it encouragement and/or warnings to general churches both then and now? Is it, as many teach, speaking to individual readers regarding their personal relationships with God? Is it a combination? How should this passage be interpreted in present times?

February 23

Luke 9:57-62

"Sure, But What's REALLY Going On?"

57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Did Jesus know what was really happening? When addressing these three men concerning following him, Jesus not only responded to their reluctance, but dug deeper into their true motivation and level of interest.

In the first case, Jesus quickly exposed the man's underlying incentive for voluntarily offering to follow. In essence, Jesus was telling him: You're thinking this may be the hot, new investment opportunity. Wrong! The fact is that you'll have even less than animals. You may not even have a home. Following me

is not a way to get rich.

That's important because even today, some are wrongly lead to believe following Christ is "the IN thing" to do. Some attend churches mainly for the purpose of connecting with and socializing with those who can further their own business ventures—networking.

Even invitations to join churches or to "accept Christ" during "altar calls" are often heavily coated with promises of earthly goodies. Jesus' words of having next to nothing are very rarely, if ever, mentioned.

In the second case of this account in Luke, Jesus asked a man to follow him. The man replied with what he felt was a legitimate excuse for not complying. He said he had to bury his father first. Apparently burials were high on the list of sacred and important responsibilities. Jesus, however, dug deeper by basically saying: Following me is to recognize what "living" and "dead" really means in light of eternity. Let the spiritually dead, bury their physically dead. The spiritually living are to help others become spiritually alive.

The third case had another volunteer (as in

the first account). The man said he wanted to follow Jesus but, in this instance, only after he had informed his family and said “goodbye” to them. Jesus responded: If you're not going to be all the way in, don't bother. Following me is a life-long commitment.

These types of excuses for not following Christ are still used today. The message is that whether you are asked to follow Christ by someone or whether you voluntarily pursue a lifestyle of Christ-likeness, you should know what’s really going on. You should know what’s at stake.

Know, with total certainty, that sacrifices must be made. Once starting a walk with Christ, so many go backward because they were never given true and reliable expectations. They didn’t understand sacrifices that would be needed.

Such sacrifices may well include the lack of wealth and even the lack of the most basic needs. Also, as a Believer one will surely come to refrain from various customs and traditions (which are unbiblical or ungodly). Believers may have to face the loss of affection or humiliation, isolation, and/or rejection from relatives for having faith in

Christ.

Before "making a decision for Christ", as some say, look before you leap. That's how Jesus taught, by example, to draw people to himself. He told the truth so people would know what was really going on.

[Matthew 8 tells of only 2 of these 3].

February 24

John 10:10

"Jobs"

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.



Job Description:
Steal, Kill, Destroy

vs.

Job Description:
Give Abundant Life

Some people go to their jobs to mostly gossip and play around. The highlight of their day is where to go for lunch, what someone else is wearing, and how to look busy while pretending to work. Not so with the thief. His job is serious business to him. In fact, he

doesn't even come to work unless he's going to tenaciously pursue getting his work done. He ONLY comes to do his job. Scripture indicates that the thief comes **not** unless he's going to do his job which is to steal, kill, and destroy.

The thief will steal, kill, and destroy friendships and any personal relationship inside and outside of homes. He will do that to physical bodies as well as physical homes. He will try to steal, kill, and destroy peace of mind, joy, truth, and one's faith in God. He's all about his business too. There's no joking in that! That's his job, he's serious about it, and he does it well.

Christ is just as serious. However, he does not seek to do harm in any way. Instead of taking something or tearing down lives, he wants to give something. What is it that Christ Jesus gives and pursues giving to people? Abundant Life.

While the thief and his followers pursue taking, Messiah and his followers pursues giving. They all have set jobs. What's your spiritual job description?

February 25

2 John

"Love, Truth, & the Doctrine of Christ"

"COME IN THE FLESH"

[also: 1 John 4:1-3]

(1) Jesus actually existed and lived on earth in full human form. He was not a concept and he was/is the promised Messiah—the Christ.

(2) The Flesh-and-blood Messiah Jesus is the only one who made the only complete and final sacrifice for sins of humans. No one else did. No one else could. No one else can do that.

[1] The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; [2] For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. [3] Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. [4] I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. [5] And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

ANTI-CHRIST / DECEIVER DOCTRINES in light of "THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST":

❶ [Anti-Christ Way of Thinking]: What you do in your flesh (how you live) doesn't matter. [But Truth: "the fruit of the spirit" vs. "the works of the flesh" (Galatians 5;22, 23)].

❷ [Anti-Christ Doctrine]: Jesus is just one of many "Christs"; one of many paths to God. [But Truth: John 14:6]

❸ [Anti-Christ Philosophy]: "Christ" is

6 And this is **love**, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. 7 For **many deceivers** are entered into the world, who **confess not** that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh**. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in **the doctrine of Christ**, hath not God. He that abideth in **the doctrine of Christ**, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not **this doctrine**, receive him not into your house, neither bid him

metaphysical (beyond natural) rather than physical (flesh). [But Truth: Jesus not only existed in physical form, but also died, rose from death, and walked on earth again. There are too many accounts, both biblical and nonbiblical to list.]

God speed: [11] For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. [12] Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. [13] The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.



February 26

James 5:16

"Confess & Pray"

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Why is it that, in many religious gatherings, some are confessing while others are just listening to confessions? Still, some aren't confessing anything at all—inside or outside of gatherings. According to this, we should ALL confess "one to another".

Also, what's the healing for which we should

pray? Is it physical, spiritual, financial, emotional, healing of the land, all of the above, or some other type of healing?

These are just things on which one may consider. Nonetheless, there is a main point. It is that mutual confession keeps us all humble. Also, results happen when there is serious and continuous prayer of righteous individuals.



February 27

Matthew 21:12,13

"Den of Thieves"

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. [Mark 11:15-17, Luke 19:45, 46, John 2:13-22]

After all the years from the time these words (or similar ones) were first recorded, what has changed? The dens of thieves still thrive. The houses of prayer are nearly non-existent. Even online, where there would be godly places of worship rather than pimp prophets, the few sites are systematically and purposefully blocked.

February 28

John 4:4-42

"Woman at the Well"

. Jesus was tired. . He sat on Jacob's well. . A Samarian woman came to get water from that well. . Jesus asked the woman to give him water. . The woman responded with the divisive classism of that time and location. . Jesus did not reply with the same narrow-minded way of thinking. Rather, he spoke of LIVING WATER. . Still in carnal	4:4 And he must needs go through Samaria. 4:5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 4:7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 4:8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) 4:9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 4:11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 4:12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 4:13 Jesus answered and said unto

thinking, the woman inquired about a method of getting the water and seemingly boasted about the significance of the well.

. Again, on a higher (spiritual) plane, Jesus spoke of "a well of water springing up into everlasting life".

. The woman asked for the special water.

. Jesus changed to earthly & personal talk in asking the woman about her "husband" to reveal something deeper about himself & future events on "worship".

her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. 4:15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. 4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 4:17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. 4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 4:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 4:25 The woman saith unto

. The woman spoke more spiritually re: “Messias cometh”. . Jesus revealed his identity. . Jesus’ disciples arrived and silently questioned the reason Jesus was speaking to the Samarian woman. . The woman left to tell others of her experience. . Jesus responded to his disciples regarding food: My food is the job of doing God's will & finishing his work. . It's eternal life production time. Workers	him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 4:26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. 4:27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? 4:28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 4:29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 4:30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.4:31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 4:32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 4:33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. 4:36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 4:37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 4:38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured,

will rejoice together.

. Could this be a reference to works-free salvation? (38, 39).

. Belief in "the Christ" was initially due to word of mouth, then from 1st-hand hearing.

and ye are entered into their labours. 4:39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. 4:40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 4:41 And many more believed because of his own word; 4:42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.



February 29

John 10:28

"Imperishable. Unpluckable."

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

It's guaranteed. It's non-ending eternal life. For many, it's a needed reminder. Nobody can snatch you. You're safe, right now and forever, in the hand of God.

Even if life seems unyieldingly unpleasant, or faith seems to be dwindling, trust and believe. God's got you! You will not (spiritually) die. No one... absolutely NO one will take you from God.

March 1

1 John 5:16-19

"Whole World in Wickedness?"

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. 18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

If one "brother" sees another "brother" sin one of those types of sins that will not lead to death, the first can pray for the second. By so doing, the first gives the second brother "life" (hope, restoration, another chance) as long as that sin is not in the category of sins which lead to death.

All unrighteousness is sin, but there's sin that leads to death and there is sin which does not lead to death.

God-born people don't *deliberately* sin but, instead, keep themselves and "that wicked one" can't touch them.

QUESTION: If the **whole world lies in**

wickedness and we are in the world, how are those of us who are born of God NOT touched by "that wicked one"?

Answer: Just as being "born of God", "begotten of God", "reborn", or "born again" are completely spiritual principles, so is being sinless and untouched by that wicked one. Even while surrounded by the filth and perversion which saturates this sin-sick world, true Believers can, spiritually speaking, remain "untouched", at least to some extent, by "keeping themselves".

Question: How does a Believer keep himself or herself, especially where he or she has little say-so about many aspects of his or her life?

Answer: Keeping oneself has to do with making right and godly decisions daily for your own life such as what to eat, where to go, what to watch or hear, etc. Where there are choices, make those that would honor Holy Creator.

Ultimately, it's about surrender to God's design for your life, regardless to the particular circumstance.

Keep in mind that many biblical principles simply cannot be understood in any human or earthly way. There is the issue of the spiritual versus the natural. Often the two do not mesh.

March 2

2 Timothy 3:8

"Truth-resisters, Reprobate"

Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

- They Resist the Truth
- Corrupt minds
- Reprobate re: The faith

What They Do & Who They Are:

REPROBATE:

shameless, bad, corrupt, degenerate, foul, immoral, improper, incorrigible, lewd, rude, sinful, unprincipled, vile, wanton, wicked, depraved, nefarious, perverted, rotten, unhealthy, vicious, villainous, decayed, deteriorated, disintegrated.

CORRUPT:

[1] dishonest, base, bent, bribable, crooked, double-dealing, exploiting, extortionate, fast and loose, foul, fraudulent, gone to the dogs, iniquitous, mercenary, nefarious, on the

take,
open padded,
profiteering,
racket,
reprobate,
rotten shady,
snide,
tainted,
treacherous,
two-faced,
underhanded,
unethical,
unfaithful,
unprincipled,
unscrupulous,
untrustworthy, [2]
depraved,
dishonored,
evil,
miscreant,
monstrous,
perverse,
villainous, [3]
contaminated,
decayed, defiled,
distorted,

doctored,
falsified, foul,
infected, noxious,
polluted putrid,
tainted, pervert,
pollute, abuse,
adulterate
animalize,
bastardize, blemish,
blight, bribe,
damage, decay
decompose deface,
defile, deform
degrade, demean,
demoralize,
depreciate, disfigure,
disgrace, dishonor,
defile, demoralize,
impair, injure,
maltreat, misuse,
outrage, ravage, rot,
ruin, spoil, stain,
subvert, taint,
undermine, violate,
warp, waste.

Truth-resisters are those who won't give truth a chance. They won't even listen to the facts. They don't just reject it after they have really tried to understand. Instead, they resist—push away from hearing truth; block hearing. They oppose the truth with prejudice and because of preconceived ideas. They prefer sweet, crafty lies and really hate the truth. They absolutely abhor truth and they detest those who love the truth.

When it comes to truth vs. non-truth, there is a spiritual clash at work.



March 3

1 John 5:3

"Love & Commandments"

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Is the "love of God" connected to the keeping of commandments? Is keeping command-ments, in any way, associated with faith, or does this verse just bring us to mandates of following certain rules which are sometimes hard-to-keep and annoying ("grievous")?

God's commandments are kept when people who say they love Him willingly, not out of obligation, show they love him. We obey because we WANT to— not because we feel we HAVE to.

The keeping of commandments from a heart of faith and love is the flowing showing of realness. It's the free-flowing manifestation of God's love within us.

No one who truly loves the holy Almighty will knowingly, intentionally, **purposefully** and continuously practice a lifestyle that diabolically opposes God's commandments.

Further, God's commandments are not grievous because genuine, sincere followers of Christ have had a heart change. Such "upgrade" in heart creates a viewable change in the output— the fruit or the product.

This passage states that to keep God's commandments IS the love of God. Keeping God's commandments is a definition of loving God. God's love and His commandments go together from a willing, committed, submitted heart.

March 4

Deuteronomy 10:12, 13

"Commandments... For Thy Good"

12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

Hey, Israel, here's what to do and why to do it. This is what the LORD, your God, requires of you:

. revere God
. walk in all of God's ways
. love God
. serve the LORD with all your heart and soul
. keep the commands of the LORD
. keep the statutes

By the way, these things are "for thy good". They benefit you.

March 5

Philippians 1:20-23

"Life or Death?"

[20] According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. [21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [22] But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. [23] For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

This is an example of the way true Believers should view the issue of life vs. death. Here, "strait" is similar to a fork in the road. Paul is saying: there are two roads in front of me. I could comfortably take either path—physical life or physical death. They both have benefits, but I'd really rather depart, (die) and be with Christ. "To die is gain"; death is an improvement, but even in living, Christ is honored within my body.

The writer is certainly not fearing death. Likewise, there is no love for physical existence on earth, except to do well while here—"the fruit of my labor". He is not, as many are,

clinging to every molecule of existence or hoping to extend time here for as long as possible.

There is a balance of accepting physical life, in which “Christ is magnified in my body” while still preferring physical death because it means actually being with Christ and he is magnified in that as well. Verse 20: “Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death”.



March 6

Ephesians 3:6

“Partakers of His Promise”

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

FELLOW-heirs… of the SAME body… partakers of his promise in Christ… With a verse so clear, why is it that many who call themselves “Christian” are in such opposition to other fellowheirs who have a different shade of skin from their own?

How is it that those who are of the same HUMAN RACE hate and harm one another?

Is the world learning from “Christians” how

to be loving of one another and united based on that fellow-heir relationship or rather, are those who *say* they love Christ learning division, oppression, prejudice, and all forms of hatred from the world?

Can Jews and Gentiles, light and dark skin shades, rich and poor… really be "partakers of His promise" if we can't even partake (share, participate, join together) concerning resources here on earth?

Is it even realistic to expect all Believers to behave as if they are joint heirs or fellowheirs in a world where there is such division based on skin shades, gender, age, height, weight, background, education, family ties etc.?

I conclude that this has to be a spiritual concept which is understood and practiced only by the godly spiritual.

March 7

Matthew 15:21-28

"Lost Sheep"

21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is

grievously vexed with a devil. [23] But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. [24] But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. [25] Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. [26] But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. [27] And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. [28] Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

- Was Jesus' response to the woman a test of her humility, faith, and/or her recognition of his authority?
- In this, did Jesus condone prejudice of Jews against non-Jews?
- Does this indicate that Jesus' ministry was specifically and solely to Jewish people?
- Was Jesus correcting his disciples who requested to send the woman away when he responded TO THEM that he was "not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel"? Was he, in fact, saying, "that's why I'm here. I was sent here for people like her"?

Following is another perspective of the same

account (Mark 7:24-30 AKJV):

24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. 25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. 27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. 28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. 29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

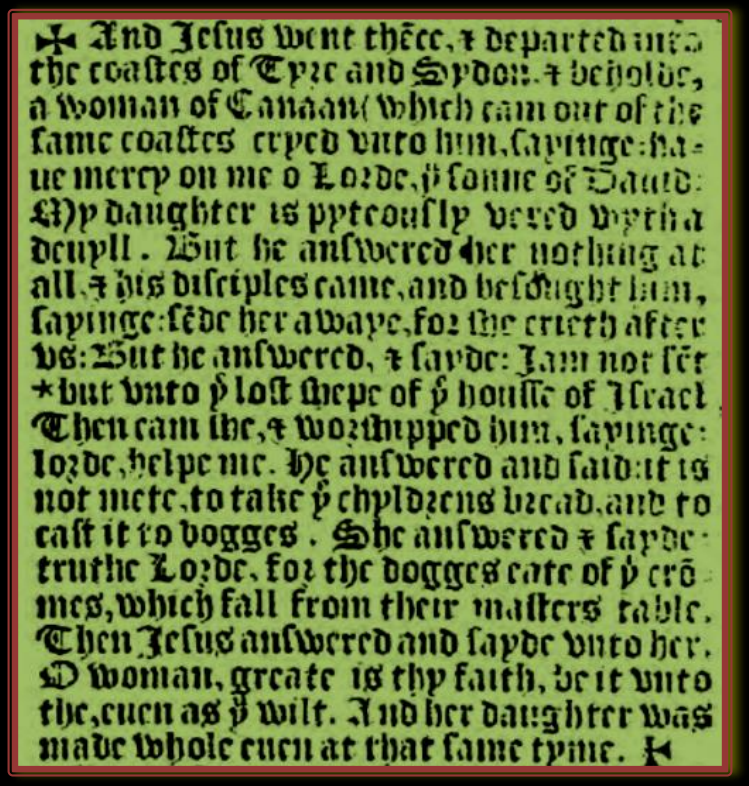
Comparing the Great Bible of 1540 with the AKJV, some differences are:

"my daughter is piteously vexed" rather than "grievously vexed" *and* "but he answered her not a word" vs. "but he answered her nothing at all"

It appears that, rather than showing division, Jesus was showing connection ("lost sheep of the house of Israel") as well as giving the

woman a chance to acknowledge a connection to him and express her understanding of his authority ("their master's" table).

It's also *possible* that Jesus, having just dealt with his own disciples' attitudes, decided to deal with the Canaanite woman along the same lines of common pre-set personal views.


And Jesus went thence, & departed into the coastes of Tyre and Sydon. & beholde, a woman of Canaan (which cam out of the same coastes) cryed vnto him, sayinge: haue mercy on me o Lorde, thou sonne of Dauid: My daughter is pytcously vexed with a deuyll. But he answered her nothing at all. & his disciples came, and besought him, sayinge: sende her awaye, for she crieth after vs: But he answered, & sayde: I am not sent but vnto the lost sheepe of the house of Israel. Then cam she, & worshipped him, sayinge: Lorde, helpe me. He answered and said: it is not mete, to take the childrens bread, and to cast it to dogges. She answered & sayde: truthe Lorde, for the dogges eate of the crōmes, which fall from their maisters table. Then Jesus answered and sayde vnto her. O woman, greate is thy faith, be it vnto the, euen as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole euen at that same tyme.

He may have been getting a sense of or revealing who she really was within—her sincerity concerning her request or perhaps her understanding of who he was. Whatever the case, Jesus exemplified acceptance rather than rejection by honoring the woman's request.

His ACTIONS were more important, at least to her, than his words.

Also, the very act of the healing can be lost when we focus too much on the "dogs" part of Jesus' words. From a distance and having

never seen this woman's daughter, he healed her. I can't help but wonder HOW? How did Jesus do that?

I might have been tempted to say that kind of thing does not happen in today's times, but I have personally witnessed similar miracle-like happenings.

On another note, in Mark's account, there's no mention of the woman's "faith". Jesus said, "for this saying…" your daughter is freed (the devil is out of her). It was her words that seemingly impressed him. Could those words have expressed faith?

These are some of the kinds of concerns that should matter to us as true Believers. These are the things on which we could be seeking God for understanding and on which we may meditate.

In a sense, we may all be as "lost sheep" because many of us are on quests to actively pursue what we need to know in order to live lives which are healthy, whole (physically, spiritually, emotionally, financially, etc.) and acceptable to God or to help others do so.

March 8

Isaiah 59:1-4

“But Your Iniquities”

1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. 4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

It’s not that God is incapable of hearing or helping; it’s that sins block the needed connection. Defiled hands, iniquitous fingers, lying lips, perverse tongues have unplugged some from the source of blessings.

This says: Yes, God can do it. He’s not unable to reach you! The problem is not with Him; it’s with you! God can, but your iniquities… your vanity, and mischief—your messy stuff has separated you from your God and has caused him to not intervene on your behalf. Your mess has created an anti-God barrier.

March 9

1 Corinthians 15:39

"From Ape to Man?"

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

There is no ape origin of human beings—plain and simple. This passage is saying not all flesh is the same—they are distinctly different. This also lets us know that the flesh of one kind does not cross over or "evolve" to the flesh of another kind. No, humans did not evolve from fish or apes or any land, water, or air creature.

Land creatures have different bodies from air creatures and from water creatures. They all have different bodies from the "flesh of men" (humans). Notice this does not say there is one kind of flesh of men and another of women or one kind of flesh of wealthy and another of poor.

Similarly, at origin and core, there are no distinctions among humankind based on skin shades either. Humans are humans. Period. Air creatures, land creatures, and water creatures follow the same order. The

appearance, or beauty, of one type is different from that of another type.

Possibly the saddest thing is that far too many who call themselves Christians, Believers, Followers of Christ, or even "spiritual" don't know this. They repeatedly cling to terms and ideologies of the ungodly, including "race" despite the fact that we, humans, are all the same race—human (of the "kind of flesh of men").

March 10

Acts 15:1-29

"Deliberations & Expectations"

1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dis-putation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the

law of Moses. 6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. 12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they

abstain from pollutions of idols,

and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. 22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye

abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication:

from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

Overview: The debate was what new Believers should do and not do. The main concern was whether or not Gentile Christians should be circumcised and were they required to keep the laws of Moses. It was decided that Gentiles were neither mandated to be circumcised nor to observe the laws of Moses, but were to, "abstain from **pollutions of idols**, and from **fornication**, and from **things strangled**, and from **blood**."

Aside from fornication, what do those things mean? How were they to be practiced? Was that to be a part of normal or mainstream Christianity? Are they mandates or mere suggestions for "New Testament Believers"?

We read "pollutions of idols" (20) and not eating "meats sacrificed to idols"(29) but did Paul contradict himself or actually clarify the matter when he gave his 'don't ask, don't tell' option in **1 Corinthians 10:14-33**? [See also Romans 14:14]

Pollutions of Idols, in a general sense, may be defined as the influence & practice of worshipping and greatly admiring false gods including statues, emblems, jewelry, trinkets, or other tangible (or perhaps intangible) items.

Additionally, it is the placing of too great a value on or inappropriately revering people, things, and even concepts or beliefs. It's a spiritually deadly contamination that spreads very fast. It is a plague of wrong worship.

Blood & Other Related Food References:
Genesis 9:4; Deuteronomy 12:16, 12:23; Deuteronomy 14:21; Leviticus 3:17, 7:26, 17:13; 1 Samuel 14:33

Fornication is commonly defined as physical consensual sexual intercourse between two people who are not married to each other. However, spiritual fornication is often implied throughout Scripture.

In the book of The Wisdom of Solomon (chapter 14, verse 12), you will see it spelled out plainly in connection with idolatry. Why, in Acts 15, might fornication have been placed alongside prohibitions regarding foods?

One view is that in eating foods, there is a connection, mingling, ingestion, and bond created, much like in sex, but with someone or something that is not allowed (fornication).

[See also: Acts 21:25, Revelation 2:14, 2:20]

March 11

Romans 1:16

"Salvation to Whom?"

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Salvation is to everyone, regardless to what they say, do, or believe? Salvation to everyone who believes in every "path"? Salvation to Jews and Greeks only? Salvation to all who believe the gospel of Christ? Salvation is a shameful farce for the weak-minded to explain misery and to provide emotional comfort?

What's *your* interpretation? Hint: Take heed HOW you hear.

March 12

Romans 8:33,34

"Spiritually Lawyered-Up"

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

God justifies. He's the judge, but Christ intercedes (mediates, pleads, arbitrates) for us.

Looking at this passage, I see a judge perched high on his bench in a courtroom. There I am being accused of wrongdoing and the charges are accurate but I have the best lawyer ever! He's not just my attorney, he's my long-time personal friend. Plus, he's so tight with the judge that they're as one.

My lawyer speaks, "Your Honor. We request all charges be dropped as my client has immunity."

Judge: Approach the bench, counselor.

Attorney Jesus Christ, Saviour: Your Honor, this person's penalty has already been paid in full by me and that gift has been genuinely accepted.

Judge: Very well. All charges are dropped. Your client is free.

Judge to me: You made the right decision in getting this lawyer to represent you. In fact, it surely is the best decision of your life.

March 13

2 Timothy 1:12

"Justifiable Confidence"

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Though I endure "these things", Christ is fully capable of handling issues on my behalf. He'll honor my commitment to him all the way to the day of judgment. I know I can trust him.

March 14

Ecclesiasticus 21:2

"Sin & Serpent"

2 Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest too near it, it will bite thee: the teeth thereof, are as the teeth of a lion, slaying the souls of men.

There was an elderly man whose vision was worsening as time passed. He was retired and didn't have to work for a living but he still wanted to go places. He liked traveling by car. He decided to place an advertisement for a driver.

Two applicants came for the position. One was

a named Michael and the other, Joe. The man asked the first applicant, Michael, to take him for a ride to show driving skills. He drove nicely around the peaceful and beautiful mountainous regions then returned the man to his home. It was then time for Joe's driving portion of the interview and Joe was ready. He drove up and down the hills and mountains with precision. Seeing a cliff, he told his potential boss, "I'm really going to show you something."

Joe proceeded to accelerate, driving very fast near the cliff then suddenly stopped just at the very edge. "It really looked as if we were going over," the man commented, after catching his breath, "you showed me something there"!

Once home, the elderly man said he'd made his decision. He thanked both Joe and Michael for applying. He told Joe that he showed tremendous talent and skill by driving so near the cliff, but that he wanted someone who knew how to stay away, far away from cliffs.

That's what's best for us all when it comes to dealing with sin. We don't need to see how close to it we can get without going over. No, we need to stay as far from it as possible. Though in it, some seem to do alright, recover,

or even thrive, sin, as with a very poisonous snakes' bite, is ultimately deadly. The goal should be to steer clear of it.

March 15

Jeremiah 29:8-14

"He Directs & Re-directs"

8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD. 10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you

to be carried away captive.

Why do people take out only one verse of this passage? Why don't they ever quote the parts about deceiving prophets and dreams, 70 years, finding only after seeking God with "all your heart", or being returned from captivity? Why do they just pluck out verse 11 and even misapply that?



March 16

2 Timothy 3:16
"D.R.C.I."

All scripture is given
by inspiration of God,
and is profitable
for Doctrine,
for Reproof,
for Correction,
for Instruction in righteousness:

ALL scripture was given by INSPIRATION; not dictation. Writers were inspired to document what we understand to be Scripture. Much of what we call "Bible" (a collection of books written by many and translated by many over many years) never claims to be what "thus saith the LORD".

Further, there are issues of translations of

languages and interpretations within various cultures, numerous versions within the same language which differ in meaning, and what was canonized vs. eliminated from cannon and why. Those matters are not even discussed here.

This verse tells us something which is so plain but that is so often disregarded. Scripture, as a whole, has purpose: doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness—D.R.C.I.

March 17

Judges 13:1-14

"Samson: Before He Was"

1 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. 2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. 3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. 4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: 5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive,

and bear a son; and no rasor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. 6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: 7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. 8 Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. 9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. 10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. 11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. 12 And Manoah said, Now

let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? 13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. 14 She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.

FOR THOUGHT

- God's people "did evil again" and were temporarily placed in enemy hands.

- An angel promised a barren woman she would give birth. He gave her specific prenatal instructions.

- The angel of the LORD was visible, spoke audibly, and appeared a 2nd time, by request.

- Sampson was discussed by human parents with a holy angel even before being was conceived.

March 18

1 Esdras 6

"Corn, Salt, Wine, & Oil"

30 …corn, salt, wine, and oil, and that continually every year without further question, according as the priests that be in Jerusalem shall signify to be daily spent: 31 That offerings may be made to the most high God…

Biblical Symbolism:

Corn = Productivity
Salt = Preservation
Oil = Wisdom
Wine = Moderation



To learn more about **1 Esdras 6**, please copy/paste the link below into your browser's web address bar:

https://search-the-scriptures-daily.blogspot.com/2018/07/corn-salt-wine-oil.html

March 19

Romans 8:35-37

"More Than Conquerors"

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

We may face inevitable physical, psychological, financial, emotional and/or spiritual ups and downs in life as true Believers. This passage is a very necessary scriptural reminder that none of these specific things can separate us from the love of Christ because we are "more than conquerors".

What's being *more than* a conqueror? There's winning and losing, right? What could be greater than winning? When we win here on earth, that's all there is to win, but when we win "through him that loved us", that love takes us beyond temporary earth-dwelling and after it into eternity. We're inseparable now AND later.

March 20

1 John 2:28
"Abide"

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Abiding is all-the-time living. When Christ comes, whenever it is and however that happens, if were practicing regular, all-of-the-time, routine, normal living "in him" (according to what we have as scriptures), we won't be ashamed.

Think about this.

How confident would you be that Christ would take you with him?

If you were in the arms of another person's spouse (fornication/adultery), do you think he would collect you along with His holy saints? At Christ's coming, would you be confident having lied on someone so severely that it had cost them their reputation and/or livelihood? Is assurance justifiable if you are living in willing disobedience, rebellion, slackness, or faithlessness toward Christ?

March 21

John 14:21

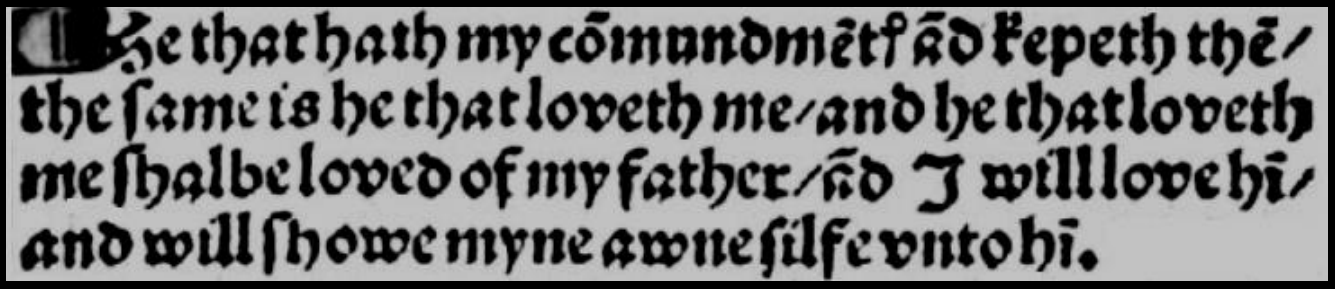
"Commandments, Love, Godly Manifestation"

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Tyndale 1526 *(Top: typed; Bottom: handwritten from original page)*

He that hath my commaundmentes and kepeth them / the same is he that loveth me / and he that loveth me shalbe loved of my father / and I will love him / and will showe myne awne silfe vnto him.

Rather than the AKJV's harder word, "manifest", Tyndale translates: show my own self.



For Thought:

What happens if one, through no fault of his or her own, does not "have God's commandments"? How can commandments be kept that are not known?

Jeremiah 31:33 speaks of a covenant with Israel in which God will put His law in their inward parts and write them in their hearts. Hebrews

8:10 and 10:16 has similar words, but what of those who are not of the house of Israel?

Could it be that God must draw souls to him, then they will be able to hear and make a choice?

March 22

Philippians 4:6, 7
"Full of Care? Prayer!"

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

This passage does not guarantee answers to prayers nor does it promise fixes to problems. Further, no where does it say to try to name and claim cares away. It does, however, instruct to not be full of care about anything. It further says that through praying and making requests, along with the giving of thanks, to TALK TO GOD about "everything".

It says that in doing those things, a specific kind of peace which is God's own peace and one that passes or supersedes all

understanding, will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

It's "letting go and letting God", as some have described the volitional act of trusting God by being real with the most High, asking for help, and still thanking Him. In each and every issue, it's saying and really meaning, "God, this is what's happening. This is how I'm really feeling. That is what I need Your help with. And I thank You in advance."

In many ways, following this advice may be seen as a blessing and as a prescription for addressing circumstance-based mental calamities. Really horrific things sometimes happen to people, especially to those who are pursuing godliness. Nonetheless, when we follow this assistance, we fair better emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically than do those who follow the world's ways of so-called "managing stress".

Does it mean everything will be wonderful and you'll always be blissfully happy and grinning. Scripture never says that. Any doctrine that teaches such or leaves you believing or expecting that is false doctrine and "another gospel" which opposes Christ.

March 23

Matthew 9:14,15

"Mourn & Fast"

14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? 15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Jesus was saying that fasting was connected to mourning and there was no need to mourn while he was still with them. His disciples, Jesus said, would fast when he was gone.

So, what do we do with this? What are we to gain from it? Are we to think, "so because Jesus is gone, we should fast often." Instead, should we think, "Jesus is not really gone because he lives within us so we don't need to fast."

Is there anything Believers need to understand from the fact that John had his own disciples? Should our focus be that fasting was a normal and expected practice for them and should possibly be for us as well? What should be the Believer's take-away from these and other mourn and fast scriptural passages?

March 24

Prayer of Manasseh

"Great Goodness & Mercy"

...but thy merciful promise is unmeasurable and unsearchable; for thou art the most high Lord, of great compassion, longsuffering, very merciful, and repentest of the evils of men. Thou, O Lord, according to thy great goodness hast promised repentance and forgiveness to them that have sinned against thee: and of thine infinite mercies hast appointed repentance unto sinners, that they may be saved... IMPORTABLE

...Now therefore I bow the knee of mine heart, beseeching thee of grace. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge mine iniquities: wherefore, I humbly beseech thee, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me...

...For thou art the God, even the God of them that repent; and in me thou wilt shew all thy goodness: for thou wilt save me, that am unworthy, according to thy great mercy...

How can we ask God for forgiveness if we have forgiven, actually excused, ourselves? Where does Scripture ever say to "forgive yourself"?

Here, this godly person had humbled himself and asked God for mercy and forgiveness.

That's a guideline for true Believers of each and every time period and for most any situation.

For audio details on the Prayer of Manasseh:
https://archive.org/details/prayer-of-manasseh-with-modern-notes

March 25

Hezekiah
"Hezekiah"

2 Kings 16:20 – 20:21
2 Chronicles 28:27 – 32:33;
Isaiah 36:1 – 39:8
Also: **Proverbs 25:1, Isaiah 1:1,**
Jeremiah 15:4, 26:18-19,
Hosea 1:1, Micah 1:1

Who was Hezekiah? What was his lineage? In what ways did he succeed or fail? What can we learn from his life?

March 26

2 Peter 2:1-3
"You're the Product, But *They* Profit"

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the

way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words **make merchandise of you**: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Tyndale 1526 "by which".

Those who are deceived
are money to deceivers.

March 27

Acts 11:1-18

"Repentance Unto Life"

1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received **the word of God**. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. 4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: 6 Upon the

which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall

be baptized with the Holy Ghost.
17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

- The "word of God/the word of the Lord", as in verses 1 and 16, existed long before any Bible or various "Bible versions" so no Bible is "the word of God".
- The Holy Ghost fell on them as it had done with the Jews.
- God has given (made available) "repentance unto life" to non-Jews.



March 28

2 Timothy 4:3,4

"Turned to Fables"

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Some do not want to hear the truth. They reject the logical and reasonable principles. In scriptural terms, that is “sound doctrine”. Instead, they turn from sound doctrine. So, at some point, they won’t even be able to hear truth. They will have been TURNED—driven to, forced into, locked into a craving for fables.

God will allow them to only hear the deceptions that scratch their itching ears—that satisfy their lust for sweet lies. They will pursue the teachings that say what they want to hear rather than teachings of solid truth.

They refuse truth. They willingly and consciously snub or repudiate truth. So then, they don’t get any. Because they turn from truth, they are then turned to a spiritual position whereby they cannot hear or tolerate truth.

They push away fact in favor of fiction and are stuck with that decision because they have been turned. They voluntarily turn. Then, they are involuntarily turned.

March 29

1 Thessalonians 5:18

"Thankful In Everything"

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Notice that this verse says to give thanks IN everything. It does not say that we will or should give thanks FOR everything. Be honest about situations. You may not, at least for a time, truthfully be able to be thankful *for* some things, but you can choose to thank God *in*, during, or despite, circumstances.

Sometimes you may only *truly feel* gratitude in that you know whatever is happening is temporary. Because human life itself is temporary, you can count on whatever the issue is, it is temporary.

For the Believer, it is God's will that we have this kind of thinking and attitude—to give thanks no matter what. Not necessarily FOR, but IN everything, we can give thanks. We can be thankful in good times as well as less than good times.

March 30

Colossians 2:8

"Philosophy & Vain Deceit"

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Beware!

Be aware because you could get ruined. Philosophy and vain deceit are dangerous. They pertain to people's traditions. They have worldliness at their very core. They pump you up and play on pride to boost your ego such as "self-worth", "self-esteem", "self-actualization, and more. Those things are not pro-Christ. They don't lead you to Christ's way of thinking and living.

Don't allow anyone, including preachers, professors, or the anti-Christs who control media, to scramble your mind with their agenda of an ungodly value system. Don't get tangled in the traditions of humans. Don't get caught up in worldliness. What the world provides is trickery, treacherous dishonesty, and false hope. The world does not offer anything of the way of Christ.

March 31

2 Corinthians 5:21

"What He Did"

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

God caused Jesus, who never sinned, to become sin for us so we could be "the righteousness of God".

The more I understand this verse, the more I wonder why anyone would pass on such offer! To have our sins be transferred so the sinFUL can be sinLESS is the Ultimate Deal! That's what Jesus did. He made it so we do not have to suffer for the sins inherited to all humankind.

April 1

Isaiah 43:2

"You Are Not Alone"

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Regardless to where you were and how tough the situation, God was assured to be there.

This, though not written to every person or even to every Believer, might be seen as encouragement to those who trust in God.

There are plenty of scriptures preserved as instruction for Believers to count on God's presence and care. This one, as with others, does not in any way indicate that God's people will be shielded from the waters, rivers, or fires (hardships).

There is no glossy, problem-free exemption for those who trust God. In fact, according to many passages, it is because of our relationship with God that there are often even greater difficulties. Because we have aligned ourselves with God, the floods of adversity are often higher, but we are not alone and God will not cause us to be alone.



April 2

Romans 8:38,39

"Inseparable"

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For some, death can be intimidating. Life, for some, may seem unbearable. The very thought of spiritual beings—even godly ones which are known as angels, can make some uncomfortable. High-powered rulers or any who may have authority on earth or in a spiritual realm may threaten a sense of stability for some. There are all kinds of things, people, and situations which may cause discomfort or instability. As for True Believers, however, none of those things can separate us from God's love which is in our Lord Jesus, the Christ.

We can be separated from other people. We can be separated from places and things with which we may have some degree of attachment, but true Believers cannot be separated from God—not here on earth and not in eternity.



April 3

Titus 1:14
"Religious Fables"

Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

(See also Mark 7:9)
Fables and commandments of people do,

indeed, turn some from the truth. They do so because they, the fables and human-made requirements, themselves, are turned away from (against) truth—they reject truth.

The very principles are a rejection of the truth. So, those stories and mandates are geared toward turning anyone who observes them away from the truth. Anyone who listens to the cultural fables and man-made rules and follows them are eventually turned away from truth. They become blind followers of blind leaders (Matthew 15:14b).

Whatever one gives heed to has the potential to affect the person one way or another. That is why Believers should *take* heed to what we *give* heed. We must be cautious about accepting and embracing fables, traditions, and anything that causes us to turn from truth.

 **April 4**

Romans 10:1-3

"Zealously Ignorant"

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For

they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

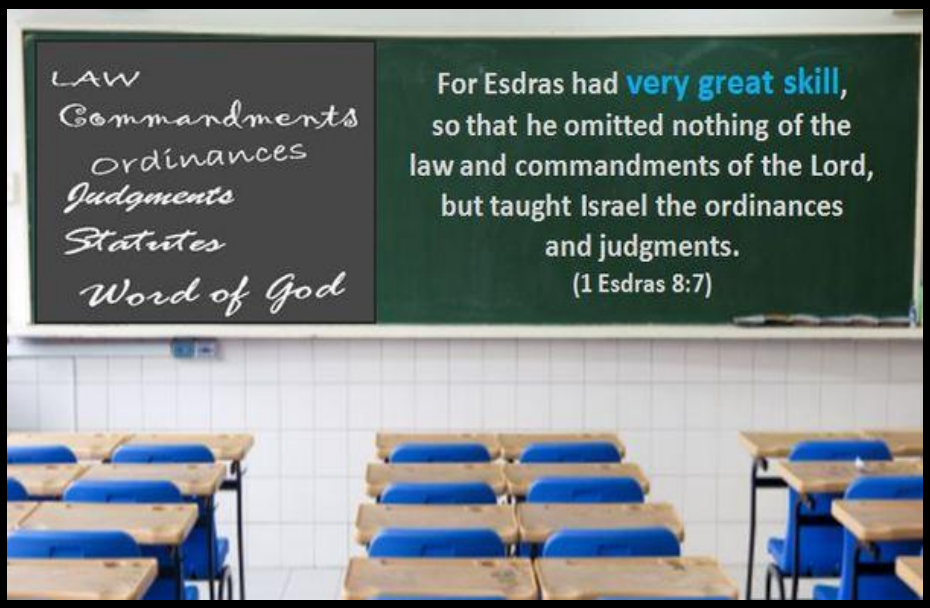
What happens when, because people are “ignorant of God’s righteousness”, they do not submit to it, and, instead, pursue establishing their own righteousness? Even sincere, well-meaning people who think they are following God, can have a zeal—an excitement or enthusiasm, but “not according to knowledge”. In other words, one can be passionately wrong or in error and, therefore, pursue self-made or human-made “righteousness”. It’s not God’s righteousness; it’s someone’s own.

It’s the stuff of cults. It is the foundation of cult-like, anti-Christ, or ungodly rebellion in thinking and behavior. It’s as wrong as a polar bear on a Florida beach. One who has a zeal of God without knowledge is like a giddy fool.

April 5

1 Esdras 8:7, Ezra 7:10

"Skilled in Truth: A Protection"



1 Esdras 8:7

"For Esdras had VERY GREAT SKILL, so that he omitted nothing of the LAW and COMMANDMENTS of the Lord, but taught all Israel the ORDINANCES and JUDGMENTS."

Ezra 7:10

"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the LAW of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel STATUTES and JUDGMENTS."

Esdras (Ezra) was very skillful in the law of the Lord. He didn't omit anything concerning the law, ordinances, commandments, judgments, and statues of God. Why is that significant?

If you thought you had to know every letter of the English alphabet or your job or business and your entire family may severely suffer, wouldn't you want to be sure you knew A to Z well?

You may not only want to know how to identify each

letter, but you may want to be sure of the pronunciations as well as the sounds each character made. You would want to be sure of the correct form or shape of each letter when writing both upper and lower case. You may also find out the exact order of the letters in relation to the entire alphabet or even the history of each letter.

If you were determined to know more, you might be prepared with a few words that began with each letter and know how to sing the alphabet song. You might even learn to recite the alphabet both forward and backward. You might study to know the numerical equivalent of each letter such as “B” is number 2 (the second letter) and “J” is number 10. You’d likely want to know all you could know if that was what it took for protection against unnecessary hardship, right?

That is how important understanding the law was for Esdras. He explained in detail how to avoid major problems and the king took the warning seriously. The king wanted protection, rather than God’s wrath, on his kingdom and personal life.

Do we sometimes fail to see the benefit of being skillful in Scripture? Could knowing and obeying as much scriptural text as we have available protect us from pitfalls which could be prevented? How can we become proficient in knowledge and understanding of all God would have for us?

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1 Esdras 8:21 Let all things be performed after the LAW of God diligently unto the most high God, that wrath come not upon the kingdom of the king and his sons.

Ezra 7:23 Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?



April 6

Titus 1:16

"Pro-Talk / Anti-action"

They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Compare with the 1526 Tyndale:

They confesse that they knowe god: but with dedes they de nye hym and are abhominable/ and disobedient/ and vnto all good workes discommendable.

They confess that they know God: but with deeds they deny him and are abominable, and disobedient, and unto all good works discommendable.

Notice:
- ✞ profess/confess,
- ✞ works/deeds,
- ✞ reprobate/discommendable

Of the words, the latter difference seems significant. While neither “reprobate” nor “discommendable” is commonly used in modern English (circa 2020 A.D.), the latter seems weaker.

The AKJV seems to say, “even your best is corrupt”. To me, the 1526 says, “your good works are not so great.” I don’t know which agrees more closely with the original language, but, in this case, “reprobate” seems more potent in my opinion. Nonetheless, the issue, of course, is the overall message itself:

Some say they know God, but their actions show they definitely do not know God. Their horrible and disobedient behavior denies that He is God of their lives. Their so-called “good” works are actually against God, rather than being for God. Their attitudes and actions are actually anti-God.

April 7

Isaiah 46:9-10

"God's Timing, God's Desires"

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

God really is in control. He knows past, present, and future.

April 8

Jeremiah 17:9-10

"Motivations & Actions Analyzed & Paid"

9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

"Follow your heart", many say. Really? Scripture says the heart is more deceitful than anything else. The heart is so bad that it is described as being "desperately wicked" and that humans don't even know its depravity. However, God searches the heart and compensates humankind based on actions.

April 9

Romans 8:18

"It'll All Be Worth It In The End"

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Looking for temporary and immediate gratification? That's simply is not the biblical Christian life. Instead, there is often much suffering in this existence for the Believer. However, that's not the end of the story. Having been through so much suffering and also having seen a shining light and hearing the voice of the Lord Jesus, Paul believed the sorrows here on earth are next to nothing when compared to the glory that's going to be made known "in" us.

April 10

2 Peter 3:9

"God is Not Slack"

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Sometimes it really does seem as if God is slack. Particularly when we look at how much destruction, confusion, chaos, and breaking of rules/laws others get away with, God seems unwilling or unable to make them stop. It often does seem as if God is unconcerned or absent.

However, it's God's mercy and patience rather than carelessness that makes Him slow to punish. According to this passage, God tolerates a lot for the sake of humankind because He doesn't desire anyone to "perish" or to be eternally condemned. It's God's desire that everyone would repent and though some view that compassion as weakness, it is not that at all.

That simply is not the case. God is not slack. His longsuffering is not forever-suffering.

April 11

Luke 7:11-17

"The Dead Has Arisen"

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. 12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much

people of the city was with her. [13] And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. [14] And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. [15] And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. [16] And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. [17] And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about.

Bier: A stand on which a corpse or coffin containing a corpse is placed before burial; a coffin along with its stand; a frame, usually of wood, on which to carry a load; a stretcher (pronounced "beer" as deer or cheer)

This is one of three instances where Jesus took someone from death to life. He raised the dead.

April 12

Psalm 123

"Feeling Bad, Low, & Oppressed"

1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have

mercy upon us. 3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. 4 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

Have you have ever been in a situation that lasted for a long time where you felt oppressed? Here's a prayer from people who experienced being put down, rejected, mocked, and scorned.

They spoke to the One who lives "in the heavens".

They acknowledged absolute dependence as does a person who must rely on one who has control and power.

They stated they were waiting for God to show mercy and pled for mercy.

They told God about their deepest emotional pain in saying, "we are exceedingly filled with contempt". These people were expressing how they were being very badly treated and how that affected their very souls. They were being grievously scorned and treated contemptuously by people who were living proudly and lavishly.

Psalm 123 is a good 1-2-3-Step Method for dealing with oppression of any kind:

❶ Call on the heavenly Father.

❷ Acknowledge your dependence on Him and seek His mercy.

❸ Tell God what's really happening. Freely share your experiences and express your true feelings without fear or embarrassment.

April 13

Jeremiah 19:1-15

"God's Wrath For Idolatry & Rejection"

1 Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; 2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, 3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel;

Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. 4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; 5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind: 6 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter. 7 And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcases will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth. 8 And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof. 9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them. 10 Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, 11 And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will

I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury. 12 Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as Tophet: 13 And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods. 14 Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the LORD's house; and said to all the people, 15 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.

God was saying:

- "I will bring evil upon this place..."
- I will make the advice they follow useless...
- I will cause you to die in front of your enemies...
- Your dead bodies, including your sons and daughters, will be food for air and

land animals.

- You'll become cannibals because of the harshness.
- The city will be empty and brutally mocked by others.
- I will break the people and the city.
- Deaths will be so numerous that there won't be any place for burials.
- I'm going to bring all the evil I've determined for you and your city.

Why was there such gruesome and morbid proclamation? Could the very last sentence of this chapter, "...because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words" provide insight?

Is this just about them then and there or might, at least some part of it, be useful for us here and now?

In today's times, are there some who so reject God's warnings and truth that they refuse to even *hear* what "thus saith the LORD..."?

April 14

John 6:37

"The Process"

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

There is a doctrine that everyone will be "saved". It proclaims that every single soul, regardless to the "path" they take, regardless to the decisions they make, irrespective of the entities, deities, or gods they worship, or their own willingness to accept or reject God, will go to heaven. The teaching is that, no matter what choice one makes, everyone goes to glory, eternal peace, paradise, nirvana, or whatever word one wishes to use to describe a blissful eternity. However, in this one verse, we find a process. Here's how it goes: Whomever the Father gives to Christ, those persons will come to Christ. Therefore, whomever comes, will not be rejected by Christ.

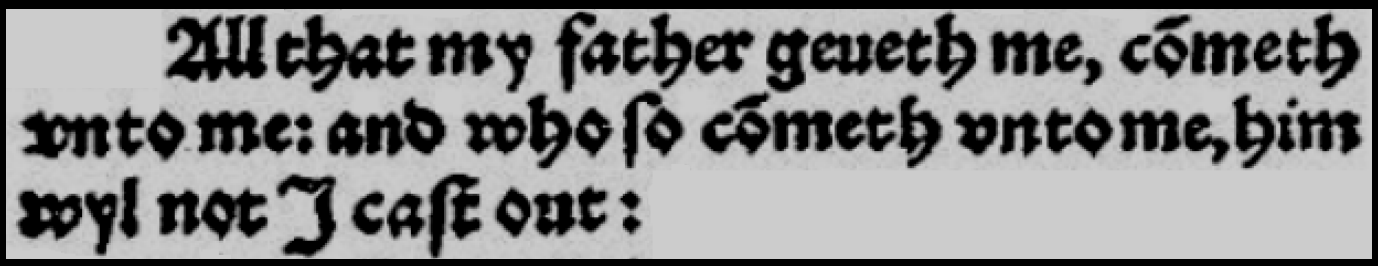
The implication is that those who come to Christ won't be rejected by him because they've been, shall we say, "pre-approved". They've been verified or vetted and accepted. They are "in".

Christ won't say, "Well, Father. You may like them, but I don't. Let's take a meeting. Let's discuss it."

NO. Acceptance by the Father is acceptance by the Son.

Now, there is no indication that the Father will accept any who rejects the Son. In fact, we have in Scripture that no one comes to the Father except, though the Son (John 14:6). We see an unbreakable connection—a definitive oneness in the process. There's no skipping the Son or bypassing the Father.

Coverdale, 1535


All that my father geueth me, cõmeth vnto me: and who ſo cõmeth vnto me, him wyl not I caſt out:

All that my father giveth me, cometh unto me: and whoso cometh unto me, him will not I cast out:

April 15

Luke 16:15

"Popular? Valuable? Honorable? Rubbish!"

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

WHAT or WHOM do *you* esteem highly? Sports, adoration of celebrities, religious or political

leaders, wealthy business moguls, the rich and famous, children, career, personal appearance, cars, house, financial investment, electronic devices, pets, talent, social status, etc…?

"…highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

April 16

1 Samuel 16:7

"Inside"

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Q: What is important to God which should also be to God's people?

A: The Heart!

April 17

Isaiah 65:17

"Forgot & Never Brought To Mind?"

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Does this mean people won't recall life on this

present earth? In context with the rest of the passage, is this verse not talking about eternity at all? What does it really mean?

April 18

Luke 16:19-31

"Abraham's Bosom vs. Hell & Torments"

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which

would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Questions More Than Answers:

✞ Was the beggar's body ever buried? Does burial, itself, have any relevance concerning one's eternity?

✞ Does that permanent "gulf" dividing "Abraham's bosom" and "hell" allow sight but not travel between the two destinations?

✞ Does "Abraham's bosom" exist after the resurrection of Christ?

† It's at least fairly reasonable (within the context of Scripture) that the rich man's selfishness in his extravagance made him worthy of the unpleasant locale. However, what entitled the beggar to a pleasant after-life? Surely extreme poverty is not a criteria for the good place.

✞ Was this good place versus bad place story, just that, a story or parable but not a re-telling of an actual account?

† What message was Christ conveying?

✞ What should the Believer come away with from having read/heard this information?

Joshua 24:15

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

1 Kings 18:21

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Matthew 6:21-24

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

James 1:6, 8

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea

driven with the wind and tossed. [8] A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 4:1-8

[1] From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? [2] Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. [3] Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. [4] Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. [5] Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? [6] But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Ecclesiasticus 15:16-17

[16] He hath set fire and water before thee: stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt. [17] Before man is life and death, and whether him liketh shall be given him.

Think About It

What are some important decisions with which you have been faced?

What choices did you make and why?

Does everyone have all of the same choices?

How significant are choices?

Are there choices which could have lasting effects on life, future generations, the course of history, or even eternity?

Can choices affect happiness?

Could one choice affect the ability, or loss of ability, to make other choices?

April 20

2 Peter 2:1-3, 12-15,18-19; James 1:13-15

"Deceived—Lead Away"

2 Peter 2:

1-3 **[1] But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that**

bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. [2] And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. [3] And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

12-15

[12] But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; [13] And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; [14] Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: [15] Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

18-19

[18] For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in

error. [19] While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

wanton extravagant, lewd, outrageous, promiscuous, shameless, unprincipled, unscrupulous, wayward, cruel, malicious, arbitrary, contrary, double-crossing, evil, inconsiderate, mean, merciless, needless, ornery, perverse, senseless, spiteful, uncalled-for, unfair, unjust, unjustifiable, vicious, wicked, willful, careless capricious, changeable, fanciful, fickle, fluctuating, free, frivolous, immoderate, lavish, rash, reckless, unreserved, unrestrained, variable, wasteful, whimsical, wild

James 1:13-15

[13] Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: [14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

What leads or draws YOU,
away from truth?

Are there really some who follow false prophets or false teachers which deliberately speak evil against truth?

April 21

Psalm 44:20-21

“God Knows”

**20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;
21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.**

People often lie to themselves. Actually, Satan deceives. Even so, here, we’re reminded that Creator is capable of digging into us and, like a medical device which enters the body to look deeply for physical issues (a laparoscope), God searches within our spiritual bodies to detect spiritual sickness. He knows, even when we deny spiritual illness, if we have sought out “a strange god”.

When physicians use a laparoscope, it’s considered by medical professionals to be major surgery. As such, it has the potential for major complications including injury to internal organs and bleeding, injury to the bowel or injury to the bladder. Therefore, only highly skilled surgeons should perform this procedure. God, Creator of our bodies as well as our spirits, is the highest skilled of all and is fully competent to examine and

diagnose our deepest inward condition without making things worse. God knows the secrets of hearts. *[See also Ezekiel 11:5]*

So, "if we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god", God is aware. This passage is not talking about knowing a proper name for God or using the correct pronunciation or language. It's about understanding that God knows if, when, and where we have left Him to pursue "a strange god". Such strange gods could be the quest for wealth, addictions to harmful foods, drinks, and other substances, addictions to gaming and gambling, lewd lifestyles of a sexual nature, an infatuation with the occult, various forms of entertainment, etc.

Though we may attempt to rationalize our motivations for slipping into darkness, God searches our hearts and knows the real reasons—even things we may believe to be our own private little secrets.

Know this. God knows.

April 22

John 5:24

"From Death to Life: That's a Promise"

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Oh, what a precious promise! Hear and believe. Everlasting life. No condemnation. From death straight to true life. So many people say they want a "positive" message, but reject this one. Why is that?

April 23

Ecclesiasticus 12:10-18

"About Your Enemy"

10 Never trust thine enemy: for like as iron rusteth, so is his wickedness. 11 Though he humble himself, and go crouching, yet take good heed, and beware of him, and thou shalt be unto him, as if thou hadst wiped a looking glass, and thou shalt know that his rust hath not been altogether wiped away. 12 Set him not by thee, lest when he hath overthrown thee, he stand up in thy place, neither let him sit at thy right hand, lest he seek to take thy seat, and thou at the last. 13 Who will pity a charmer that

is bitten with a serpent, or any such as come nigh wild beasts? [14] So one that goeth to a sinner, and is defiled with him in his sins, who will pity? [15] For a while he will abide with thee, but if thou begin to fall, he will not tarry. [16] An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips, but in his heart he imagineth how to throw thee into a pit: he will weep with his eyes, but if he find opportunity, he will not be satisfied with blood. [17] If adversity come upon thee, thou shalt find him there first, and though he pretend to help thee, yet shall he undermine thee. [18] He will shake his head and clap his hands, and whisper much, and change his countenance.

Enemies! They are often smile-in-your-face backstabbers who pretend to care about you as if they were on your side.

There is a song from 1971 by a group named "The Undisputed Truth" called "Smiling Faces Sometimes". Though secular, the ominous music with its driving base line and the profound lyrics of that work was almost prophetic. They even said, "oh Lord" and "Amen".

Some of the Song Lyrics: ♫

Smiling faces - Sometimes

Pretend to be your friend
Smiling faces - Show no traces
Of the evil that lurks within.
Smiling faces. Smiling faces - Sometimes
They don't tell the truth.
Smiling faces. Smiling faces tell lies
And I got proof…

Remember a smile is just a frown
Turned upside down, my friend…
Beware of the handshake that hides a snake
Beware of the pat on the back
It just might hold you back
Jealous, misery, envy… - I tell you
You can't see behind smiling faces…

The Ojay's sang about "backstabbers" in a secular hit of that same title.

♫ *"They're smiling in your face. All the time they want to take your place. The backstabbers. Backstabbers!"*

This scriptural passage, written many years before either of these songs, carries the sentiment. Verse 12 says, "…overthrow thee …stand up in thy place". It is solid wisdom and a serious warning. I wish I had heard of this, read, and understood this some years

ago. There are minions everywhere—and unlike the kids' movies, real-life minions are not friendly. This is a valuable heads-up about your enemy.

April 24

Isaiah 1:2-9

"Corrupters –OR– a Very Small Remnant"

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. 3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. 5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. 7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as

overthrown by strangers. [8] And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. [9] Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

That “very small remnant” is not described much in this passage. It is, however, understood that they are the exact opposite of the “corrupters”, which are vividly characterized. How do corrupters behave?

Though nurtured, they rebel against that care. As some say, they don’t know and they don’t want to know. They openly reject God. Verse 3 indicates that though even animals know their owners and how to return to them, these rebellious children don’t have that much sense.

They are filled with sin and wickedness as were evil-doers before them. They provoke God, have gone backward, and seemingly with no reason for doing so. They just get worse and worse, through and through, top to bottom.

The corrupters are as rotting, festering, open sores and they use nothing for healing. They are spiritually desolate and all around them is the same. They don't even realize that it's the tiny remnant (the ones who are thought of as "weird"; the oppressed and isolated ones who avoid mess and worldliness) that keep them from total annihilation as was done to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah after God's own were removed.

For Thought:
When we personally examine our own lives, do we find a greater similarity to the corrupters or to the very small remnant?



April 25

Ecclesiasticus 1:29

"Watch Yo' Mouf"

Be not an hypocrite in the sight of men, and take good heed what thou speakest.

Don't be seen as a hypocrite. That's what happens when what you say doesn't match your actions. So "take good heed",

play close attention to, watch what you say. Make sure that what you say is in line with what you do.

 **April 26**

Matthew 23:37

"Chickens and Wings?"

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Jerusalem. Oh Jerusalem! You! I'm talking to you, who are murderers of the prophets and messengers which have been sent to help you!

There have been so many, many times that I would have brought your children together. Just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, I would have reunited you all. No, you didn't want that. You would not have it so!

Has God sent prophets and messengers to you that you have "killed" by rejecting

them—shutting them out and turning them off? Has the Almighty, tried to gather you just as a hen collects her own chickens under her wings, but you refused?

April 27

Ezekiel 11:14-21

"One Heart, New Spirit"

14 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 15 Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession. 16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. 17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. 18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. 19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: 20 That they may walk in my

statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 21 But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

The LORD told me: All of your Israelite brethren have been urged to leave me. So tell them I said that though I have placed you all a long way off and among the heathen and have scattered them in many countries, things will change. To them, I will be as “a little sanctuary”.

Tell them I said: I’m going to gather and assemble them out of the countries where they have been scattered and that I will give them the land of Israel. Severe wickedness will be destroyed. I will give them a united heart and a new spirit.

I will replace the hard, stone-like heart with one that is soft and willing so they will be able to do what is right and to be my people. I will be their God.

Nonetheless, there will be some who just won’t do right, no matter what. They are determined to love the very core of “detestable things” and the “abominations” of those vile things.

Because they reject the one heart and new spirit that I want to give them, they will be paid, on “their own heads”, their own ways.

April 28

Judeth 8:12-17

“Don’t Try To Control God”

Background: The Jews were greatly at risk of being annihilated. The leaders had decided that if God did not come through for them within 5 days, they would surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. Judeth, however, did not agree and spoke to the council:

12 And now who are ye that have tempted God this day, and stand instead of God among the children of men? 13 And now try the Lord Almighty, but ye shall never know any thing. 14 For ye cannot find the depth of the heart of man, neither can ye perceive the things that he thinketh: then how can ye search out God, that hath made all these things, and know his mind, or comprehend his purpose? Nay, my brethren, provoke not the Lord our God to anger. 15 For if he will not help us within these five days, he hath power to defend us when he will, even every day, or to destroy us before our enemies. 16 Do not bind the counsels of the Lord our God: for God is not as man, that he may be threatened; neither is he as the son of man, that he should be wavering. 17 Therefore

let us wait for salvation of him, and call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it please him.

This woman puts the whole government of that land in check and does not let them get away with their wavering, wishy-washy ways.

She tells them: Who are *you* to tempt God and put yourselves in God's place in front of people?! You all don't know anything. You don't even know what humans feel and think so how can you know what God, who created humans, will do?

No, my brothers. Do not provoke the LORD to anger! Don't limit him to 5 days. He can deliver us whenever he wants to, if he chooses to do so, or he can allow our enemies to destroy us. Don't "bind the counsels of the Lord our God". Don't try to restrict, dictate, and control God's actions. God is not like humans and cannot be threatened. He doesn't waver either. So, let's wait for his deliverance. Continue to call on him for help. If it's what he wants, he'll hear us.

This certainly is not the modern-day pseudo-religious advice many get from so-called

church leaders. You know… the name, claim, declare and decree, demand and command God types of leaders? The attempt to speak wants "into existence", say what's not true as if it were true, the talk to a chair and send your angels to do your work… preachers? You know… the twisted Scripture pastors… who are also known as sorcerers in some circles.

This godly advice was needful then and certainly applies to situations for Believers now. It's the kind of faith in God that is needed in any situation where someone else seemingly or in fact has power over your life.

That woman, who wouldn't even be allowed to speak in many religious councils or in many congregations today, said something so powerful that it should be understood and remembered by all who are Believers.

The message is to ask God, wait on God, trust God, and accept the fact that God might or God might not do what's asked. God decides. Above all, don't try to control God!

April 29

Jeremiah 44:4-6

"Wasted Warnings?"

4 Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. 5 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods. 6 Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day.

Of this, and situations similar to it, where God warns and warns, but to no avail, more often than not, humans disregard mercy. They see God's patience as impotence or as God's non-existence. Many are hard-hearted and disbelieving for a reason. Where evil flourishes, even good goes bad. For many, not seeing is not believing. When nothing is done and there are no consequences for bad behavior, that way continues and worsens. Then, suddenly God slams and annihilates, but by then, it's too late.

Punishment? Many think God can't or won't punish because he doesn't seem to do that often. Rebellious, stiff-necked, hardened Law-

of-God breakers decide, since God allows what they do, it's either not so bad, he must not be able to stop it, he doesn't really care, or he really isn't there at all. If he does exist, he must be too sweet or too weak because he lets even his own messengers be killed.

God's warnings, however, are not wasted. They purposefully will serve as a testimony against the disobedient. There's a song which was first recorded by Blind Willie Johnson entitled "Nobody's Fault But Mine". Its haunting sound and words address warnings, responsibilities, and consequences.

FYI, a few good performances of this song are by Nina Simone, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, The Blind Boys of Alabama, The Staple Singers, Floossie Boyd Johnson, and Johnny Shines.

The lyrics are as follows:

♫ **Nobody's fault but mine.**
Nobody's fault but mine.
If I die and my soul be lost.
Nobody's fault but mine.

Indeed, it may well appear as if God's warnings were for some other people or for some other time or just nonsense stories designed to scare and control the masses. Nonetheless, come

judgment, there will be no legitimate excuses. Plenty of warnings were given but, "they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness…"

Would wicked people change their ways if they knew they were setting the stage for their own eternal demise—that they were "hanging themselves" and setting themselves up to be without excuse one day?



April 30

Revelation 10

"What Is That Bitter Belly-Making Little Book?"

1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: 2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, 3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered

their voices. [4] And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. [5] And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, [6] And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: [7] But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. [8] And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the

hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. [9] And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. [10] And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. [11] And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

This is one on which to think and to meditate. Sure, we could read someone's commentary. We could try to find how one person or another decided to interpret it and how those interpretations may be similar or may differ. We may even already fully understand what this means—or at least *think* we do. But for me, I have to read, re-read, perhaps listen to it through an audio Bible program or in various

Bible versions or even in other languages.

More importantly, I'll want to continue to listen to the Holy Spirit to fully comprehend, ingest, and appreciate this passage. The book of Revelation is too much of a mystery with too many layers for anyone to think we've got it all. There's always room for expansion and depth.

♫ There's a song about the book of Revelation with the following applicable lyrics:

I think I'll read it again
and see how high I can fly.

I think I'll read it again
of how my feet are gonna' rise.

I think I'll read it again
– the mighty book of Revelation…

I think I'll read it again
and let it bless my soul.

I must certainly read it again to better understand Revelation 10 and all it means—including that little book that is capable of making the belly bitter.

May 1

Mark 1:14,15
"Kingdom of GOD vs. Kingdom of HEAVEN"

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

This is a THINKER:

If the Kingdom of God were "at hand" when these words were spoken by Jesus, then is there still a need for humans, after that time, to wait for the kingdom of God? What does the kingdom of God actually mean and how is it 'at hand'? Also, is the kingdom of heaven the same as the kingdom of God?

A parallel passage, Matthew 4:17, uses "kingdom of heaven" interchangeably.

If "the kingdom of God" means the bodily manifestation of God (or personification), namely the prophesied and long-awaited Christ, then Jesus may have been saying in essence, "The one you've been waiting for is here. I'm here. Now this is what you need to

do. Repent and believe the gospel". He may have been saying: I am the spiritual embodiment of the godliness, holiness, mercy, judgment, truth... for which you have been waiting. So, repent and believe the gospel message.

Luke 4:14 says Jesus returned "in the power of the Spirit..."

The 1526 Tyndale says:
After that John was taken/ Jesus came into Galilee/ preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God/ and saying/ the gospel is full come/ and the kingdom of God is full at hand/ repent and believe the gospel.

"Full come" vs. "fulfilled" may make a difference. Full come may indicate being fully present (as with "full at hand"), whereas fulfilled may at least imply being finished or completed.

AKJV:
The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand...

Tyndale:
The gospel is full come and the kingdom of God is full at hand...

Ephesians 1:4-5, 10-11
"Predestined?"

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

We are "chosen"? Yes, but chosen for what? "That we should be holy and without blame before him in love..."

Are there some who are given a reserved seat on that heaven-bound train? Predestined, as some use the term, means, to them, to have been given a guaranteed spot—no matter what. However, no one is forced to receive the inheritance and no one is rejected who comes to Christ in humility and sincerity. Everyone

has a chance and a choice about their own eternal destination.

An example which may help to better understand scriptural predestination is see it as having a reservation for a room at the most luxurious hotel ever. Though the rate has been paid, you can still choose to check in or you can decline the reservation altogether. There is no mandate to claim the stay.

May 3

1 Corinthians 3:6, 7

"You N' You 2, But God"

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

One person planted, but it's not about them. Another person watered, but it's not about them either. There's no room for pride or people praise because it really is not about people. It's all about God who is the One who gives the increase.

The focus should be on God. The appreciation should be for God.

May 4

Romans 5:12
“Action. Result.”

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Because of one man, sin “entered into the world”. Here, it says one man—not Adam and Eve, and not the deception of Eve—just one man. That’s Adam. It was “Adam’s transgression” (verse 14) which brought about sin. And due to that, the sin which entered the world was passed on to all humankind. That is what is meant by “all have sinned”.

Sin carries with it an automatic generational penalty. We may not know the magnitude of that punishment. It is emotional grief. It is physical pain. It is isolation from God, which is spiritual emptiness. It is toil, bowing, scraping, and clawing to climb up or to stay afloat socially or financially. It is nerves in the teeth that cause oral aches and pains. It is horrific agony from childbirth. It is worry and fear. It is soul-crushing hurt from the loss of children, parents, friends, or other loved ones. It is… who knows the all the facets of

sin. It is suffering.

Whether spiritual death, physical death, or both, sin is the cause and we exist in that world. But that's not the end; it's only a part of what's going on in this realm.

This provides a picture of cause and effect. Seeing that actions bring some result, we may wish to reconsider what we do in our lives.

May 5

2 Esdras 5:42-48

"All At Once?"

42 And he said unto me, I will liken my judgment unto a ring: like as there is no slackness of the last, even so there is no swiftness of the first. 43 So I answered and said, Couldest thou not make those that have been made, and be now, and that are for to come, at once; that thou mightest shew thy judgment the sooner? 44 Then answered he me, and said, The creature may not haste above the maker; neither may the world hold them at once that shall be created therein. 45 And I said, As thou hast said unto thy servant, that thou, which givest life to all, hast given life at once to the creature that thou hast created, and the creature bare it: even so it might now also bear them that now be present at once. 46 And he said unto me, Ask

the womb of a woman, and say unto her, If thou bringest forth children, why dost thou it not together, but one after another? pray her therefore to bring forth ten children at once. [47] And I said, She cannot: but must do it by distance of time. [48] Then said he unto me, Even so have I given the womb of the earth to those that be sown in it in their times.

At first, I thought this passage may have been about the following different issues. However, I don't think this has to do with the living and dead communicating with one another as it is in the following biblical accounts:

- The rich man and beggar (both deceased) who speak to one another and the rich asks "Father Abraham" to send someone to his living brothers to warn them of hell (Luke 16:19-31). Though the request was not granted, no scripture indicates it couldn't be done. Of course, some might argue this entire account was not literal.

- In what has come to be known as "the transfiguration", long dead Moses and Elias are viewed by the living (Matthew 17:1-9, Mark:9:2-10, Luke 9:28-36).

- Through a witch, living Saul made contact with deceased Samuel.

This passage does not appear to address what

is called “time travel”—where people are supposedly able to exist in and jump from different centuries. That concept is depicted in an overwhelming number of adult and children-oriented films/stories.

It also may have nothing to do with confirming or discounting “reincarnation” (where people are said to die but return to earth in different forms many, many times).

Here in the second book of Esdras, we’re looking at a man who is asking deep questions of God about creation.

While it makes sense that earth could not sustain everyone of the past, present, and future at the same time, these words do not seem to deal with population.

The passage seems to be more about creation rather than existence. It’s about how all things must be CREATED in their own time and cannot be rushed.

An issue was judgment. Esdras was asking if time could be sped up so judgment could occur sooner. To support his premise, he cited the initial creation as being “at once” (probably in reference to the 6 days of

creation as we now have record in Genesis 1).

The angel responded with an example. He stated that though a woman may give birth to many, her womb cannot produce all the children at the same time. The angel continued by saying "the womb of the earth" is the same way. Creation does not happen all at once. The angel was saying: You're a created being. No creature can go faster than the Creator. Verse 44a uses, "haste above the Maker".

An important take-away from this passage is that creation could not have been and cannot be done all at once. Further, in anything we, as God's creations, can't speed judgment up. Everything must be done within the Maker's own timing.



May 6

Romans 7:23-25

"Serving Two Laws?"

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of

God; but with the flesh the law of sin. *[See Psalm 51:5]*

Is "the law of sin" a license to sin? Since sin is built in, should we just go ahead and embrace it—just yield to it and cater to it? God forbid.

Paul did say that he serves "the law of sin" with his flesh, didn't he? So why shouldn't we serve the law of sin with our flesh too while serving the law of God with our minds just like Paul?

There is a battle between one's flesh-like urges or carnal desires against Holy God. The godly person may find himself or herself in a struggle but for him or her it's just that— a struggle and not a yielding to the failures but rather a yielding to God.

Were Paul suggesting to do that—to just give way to sin while happily thinking about God, nothing else in Scripture would have any validity. Nothing either he nor anyone else said about holiness or godliness would mean anything at all.

Coming away with such faulty conclusion as to willfully sin "because it's already there anyway" is what happens when only a small part of Scripture is read and that part seems to say

what a person wants to hear, so they take it and run with it. They ignore anything that may contradict that error-laden and dangerous interpretation.

They will act as if, in the same passage, the same man never exclaimed that the battle made him feel “wretched” (miserable and shameful) and locked in a body of “this death”.

So no, catering to the flesh is not what this means. A true seekers will dig deeper.



May 7

Ecclesiasticus 19:24

“Better Than”

He that hath small understanding and feareth God, is better than one that hath much wisdom, and transgresseth the law of the most High. [See: Proverbs 4:7, 16:16]

Less can be best. The world promotes the most attractive, the most financially well-off and the highest level of whatever it wants to call important for the time. That’s the way of the world. It is not, however, the way of the most High.

I’d like to be fluent in ancient Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Ge’ez (the ancient

Ethiopian language). I may or I may not attain that general desire, but if I never learn any of those languages well, I need to do the basic thing. I need to live by faith and in obedience to God to the best of my ability. The world will never recognize me as successful in that way, but this passage of Scripture says I'm "better" off than someone who has all of that knowledge and more but who breaks God's law.

May 8

Malachi 3:8-12

"What is *THE STOREHOUSE*?"

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations

shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

WARNING: This is for Deep-level Thinkers Only!

If the tithing of money is required for Believers, (as some religious leaders insist upon) what is "THE storehouse"? Whose bank account is "the storehouse? Who is this "a man" in "will a man rob God? Aren't there many, many people who do not pay, nor have ever, paid tithes but who are quite wealthy? What does this commonly misapplied passage really mean? What are some reasons this passage, conveniently twisted for a specific purpose, is stressed so severely in many churches?



May 9

Acts 8:9-24

"Receiving the Holy Ghost?"

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they

were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

Thoughts And Considerations

"Saw", in verse 18, at least *implies* Simon, with

his own natural eyes visibly, witnessed something which indicated the people had received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles' hands. What did he observe?

If the receipt of the Holy Ghost is available today, who can give it and how is it received?

What might happen if a person, who practices sorcery and the bewitching of other people, laid hands on anyone who sought the Holy Ghost?



May 10

John 3:3

"SEE the Kingdom of God?"

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

<u>For Thought</u>

What is meant by "see" the kingdom of God? Is it to view with natural eyes, to experience it, or to deeply understand it? Is the kingdom of God something of one's present existence or only after physical death? In what way is one "born again"? Should there be a difference in one's life after having been reborn?

May 11

Philippians 2:5-8

"God High; Self Low"

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

There is contrast. Because Jesus was "in the form of God" as this passage says, he could have expressed himself as being equal to God. It wouldn't have been wrong to do so. However, he still made himself "of no reputation". He took on the "form of a servant". He voluntarily showed himself as lower, as humans are lower than God. He "humbled himself" and became "obedient unto death" which was the death of the cross.

This passage is calling for the reproduction of Christ's attitude and actions in our lives. Despite SELF, real or imagined—who we may have been told we are or who we may believe ourselves to be, we are called to humble

ourselves to the extent of total obedience to God.

Where it says, “let this mind be in you…”, it’s saying, allow this mindset or way of thinking be the way you think. This is the ideal thought-process.

Unlike the “love yourself” and “build your self-esteem” world-message that’s strongly thrust into every aspect of modern Westernized culture (especially in media and mainstream “education”), Scripture encourages us to pattern ourselves after Christ’s humility and obedience to God.



May 12

2 Corinthians 5:21

“**Sinless** to **Sinful, so Sinfulness** to **Righteousness**”

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

God made Jesus, sinless Jesus, to become sin for humans for a reason. Why? So we, sinful humans, would have an opportunity to become the very righteousness of God through Jesus.

May 13

Ezekiel 37:1-14

“Up, Out of Graves & Into Your Own Land”

1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. 4 Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above:

but there was no breath in them. [9] Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. [10] So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. [11] Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. [12] Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. [13] And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, [14] And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

Some may interpret this as a prophecy which means physically dead people will be massively revived by God to live again.

However, verse 11 indicates that it is figurative speech. The "graves" *may* be seen as emotional and/or spiritual deadness. It likely refers to mental bondage; a deep depression and a soul emptiness.

God had his prophet to tell Israel something. It was not a denial of their situation. It was not a shaming of them for feeling what they felt. It also was not a pseudo-motivational speech of "pull yourselves up by your boot straps" or any brand of "name and claim" your happiness.

God acknowledged that there was a deadness of spirit present. He recognized that there was lack of interest and hope and that a spiritual stagnation and general lifelessness was present.

God's message was that he saw and was capable of causing a real come up. The point was about coming up and out of those dead conditions and for the people to enter their "own land".

One understanding modern-day Believers may glean from this Old Testament passage is that we, too, may experience those very down feelings. And, as with the whole house of

Israel, God sees.

Further, God is able to draw us up out of our "graves" and revive our souls that we may truly live again and be brought into our own land. That land may be in reference to now and/or later. Now, or while still on this earth, our "own land" can be seen as a mental and emotional peace, despite harsh or unpleasant circumstances. This would be the "land", or mind of Christ that brings about the peace that passes all understanding—the calm that only a true Believer can experience.

For later, the "land" may be thought of as being heaven, paradise, or however we may describe eternal salvation. Either way, we are to no longer be ground bound. The True are set to be up and out of any type of grave and into their own land.



May 14

Luke 11:13

"The Good Gift of the Good Spirit"

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

From error-laden teachings in churches, I

initially took this passage to mean God gives us "good things". This, however, has nothing to do with general things or stuff, such as is mentioned in the first part of the verse where parents give good gifts to their children. However this verse tells us God gives something specific. God's gift is the good Spirit—the Holy Spirit. It is given to those who ask him for the Holy Spirit.

Further, there is no indication that God gives the Holy Spirit to everyone. There is also no reason to believe God would give his Holy Spirit to those who ask Buddha or Mohammad, for example. It is reserved for those who "ASK HIM" expressly for the Holy Spirit.

Additionally, I noticed that Jesus called people "evil". That's just too "negative" for today as it might injure someone's so-called "self-esteem". Jesus had no time for such foolishness. He wanted people, then and now, to know that the Holy Spirit is available—even to those of us, all humankind, who are born in sin and are, therefore, evil.

May 15

2 Peter 3:16, 17

"But They are Wrong! You Still Hold On."

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

wrest – extract, wring, squeeze out

What are "these things" and "some things"? Reading before verse 16 tells how people were doubting that there would ever be an end to human existence. They were saying: where is the promise of the Messiah's coming? We've heard this from the beginning of creation. Peter was explaining about the end times. He was saying God wasn't "slack" but was actually very patient because He did not want anyone to be eternally lost. He went on to say, verse 10, that "the day of the Lord" will "come as a thief in the night", meaning 1) that day will surely come, and 2) it will come when it is unexpected i.e. when people are, spiritually, asleep and relaxed.

Other characteristics of this "day of the Lord" / "the day of God" are:

- the heavens will pass away accompanied by a seriously loud noise,
- elements will melt from severe heat,
- the earth itself and everything in it will be completely burned

Those are the "these things" to which Peter refers when he says the "unlearned and unstable" (doctrinally) "wrest". In other words, these people or personality types try to extract bits and pieces of these end-times prophecies to form beliefs (or even to discount them altogether). They try to, as with a wet cloth, wring or squeeze out information. But because some of *these things* are "hard to be understood", they come to wrong conclusions, and that, "to their own destruction".

Also, "these things" refers to (verses 12-15) "new heavens and new earth" and to the fact that God's longsuffering is for the purpose of salvation—so people have ample opportunity to be saved.

It's not that God is WEAK; it's that He is WAITING. He's not PLAYING around; He's actually being PATIENT. It's not that God is MISSING what's happening or ignoring what's going on; it's that God is MERCIFUL.

Some people didn't then, and even now, just don't get that. Any of us can sometimes feel that since God is not always wiping out evil immediately, He won't ever do it. We may feel justice is never coming. We may feel that the world's end and all the prophesied promises will never occur. At times, we may perceive God's "longsuffering" to be His absence, lack of concern, an inability to make things right or even that God does not exist at all. These are some of the wrong conclusions that people reach. Indeed, it is to one's "own destruction".

However, true Believers are to fully understand that we do not know God's timing since "...one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (verse 8). We are urged to hold on to the faith that the promises of God will be fulfilled. Scripture warns us to be careful, "beware", because we could also get caught up in others' doubts and deceptions and be "led away in the error of the wicked..."(17). If we do, we too, could "fall" from our "own steadfastness". So Believer, though they are wrong, you still hold on!

May 16

Galatians 3:1-3

"Who Has Bewitched You?"

[1] O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? [2] This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? [3] Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Some people, though they may think they are "woke" or newly awakened to truth, have been bewitched by crafty religious yet world-think leaders who play on the painful pasts, present miseries, and emotional breakdowns of others. They use every crafty tool to draw freed souls back into thinking they must earn their salvation by doing "works of the law". They resist the biblical teaching of receiving salvation by faith. It is salvation by faith which yields the natural outpouring of good works.

The question was asked, "who has bewitched you?" Who has tricked and deceived you into disobeying the truth that you once understood? It may not have been so much of "who" as WHAT has caused you to go backward...WHY have you fallen from faith back to works?

The sentiment was as follows. You've seen Jesus. He was crucified among you. You KNOW better!

If this was the expression then—with first-hand witnesses of the work of Jesus, how much more easily it is now, with those who read of him. Even so, those who do this are called "foolish" because they started in the right direction, "in the Spirit" then stopped and went backward, deciding they would be made perfect "in the flesh".

 **May 17**

Luke 22:31, 32

"Sifted or Converted?"

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

FOR THOUGHT

Do persecutions sift you? Do they take nearly every good thing out of you as a sifter does flour? Is, instead, your faith unfailing and you're able to strengthen others?

 **May 18**

Tobit 1:3

"The Way of Truth"

I Tobit have walked all the days of my life in the ways of truth, and justice, and I did many

almsdeeds.

The Coverdale version of 1535 depicts Tobit as though being held captive, still maintaining godly dignity in that he did not forsake "the way of truth".

The Old Testament book of Psalms (119:30) and the New Testament book of 2 Peter (2:2) also speak of "the way of truth". In the apocryphal book, Tobit **chose** this way of truth lifestyle. He could have been as the others who were thinking of and living for self only and going along to get along. He didn't do that. Like the writer of the Psalm said, "I have **chosen** the way of truth…", that's how Tobit lived.



May 19

Proverbs 10:18,19

"Many Words & Silence"

18 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. 19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

What are some of the things which come from people's mouths? Lies that conceal hatred? Words with motives of malice? Slurs, smears, and insults? Somewhere, within a lot of idle chatter, there is sin. Such comes from fools.

The wise, on the other hand, practice silence. Though refraining from casual or even excessive talk is not always easy, especially when emotions are involved, it can be a sign of wisdom to "bite" one's tongue.

May 20

Philippians 1:27

"Striving TOGETHER — Not Strife"

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

It says, "as it becometh" – it's a good look and benefits the goal of its object; to be pleasingly *clothed in* its object.

In context, Believers are urged to allow our conversation (words, interests, actions, behavior) to be of benefit by being pleasingly clothed in the gospel of Christ. In other words, we are to be so *INTO* the gospel that it's as if we are wearing it.

What is "the gospel" and "the gospel of Christ"? It is the message that God loved the people of the world so much that he gave his only born

Son so that whoever believes in him wouldn't perish, but instead, have everlasting life.

Ideally, there should be no strife, but instead, Believers are to stand together tightly. We are to have a unity of spirit and mind as we strive unitedly to present and represent this gospel.

May 21

1 Corinthians 14:2-5

"Unknown Tongues & Prophecies"

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Contrary to what is commonly taught in many charismatic-styled religious organizations, speaking in tongues, or unknown tongues, should never be an "evidence" of one's righteousness or proof that one possesses the

Holy Spirit.

This passage emphatically states that unknown tongues are “not unto men, but unto God…” because no one can understand what is being said. It simply does not benefit others so it’s not for the benefit of “men” or humans. It’s as useless to other people as a French speaker attempting to communicate to a person who only knows German. Unknown tongues are spoken mysteries TO GOD, again, not to humans and it serves to strengthen and encourage only the speaker.

Prophecies, on the other hand, are to be understandable words spoken by humans to other humans with very distinctive purposes. Verse 3 says prophecies are for the purpose of: exhortation, edification, and comfort.

Believers should know the purposes for and differences between unknown tongues and prophecies.

May 22

Psalm 31:18

“An Ongoing Prayer”

Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

Silenced LIES! If this verse, which was part of a prayer, were fulfilled every time, this whole world would be an entirely different and better place.

However, lying lips continue to speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against those who pursue righteous living. Liars do what? They lie. And they seem to have an affinity to do so against those who have sincere hearts toward God. It's got to be a spiritual thing! Even so, for lying lips to be stopped is a worthy desire. It surely is a prayer worth praying... over and over and over.



May 23

Matthew 14:13-21

"Loaves & Fish"

13 When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities. 14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick. 15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. 16 But Jesus

said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. 17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. 18 He said, Bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. 20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. 21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

*For more, go to "**Leaven, Loaves, and Leftovers**" on the1611.weebly.com:*
the1611.weebly.com/whats-the-difference-between-the-feeding-of-the-4000-and-the-5000.html

May 24

Galatians 2:16-21
"By the Faith of Jesus Christ"

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a

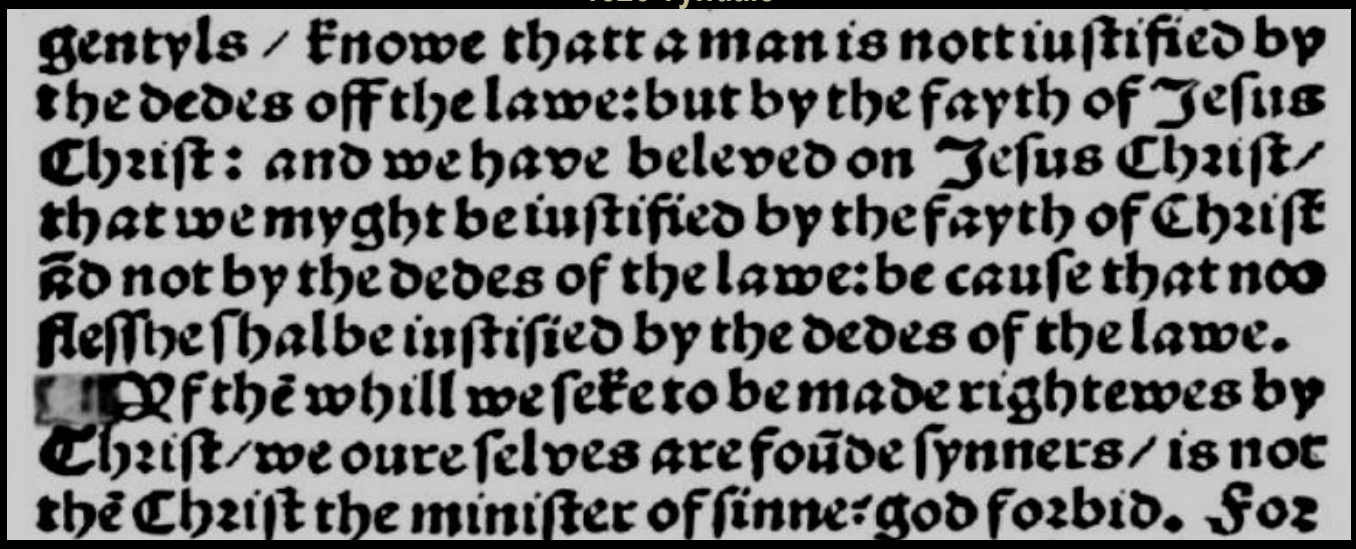
transgressor. [19] For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. [20] I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. [21] I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

No one is validated by doing works of the law. Justification is only by faith in Jesus, the Messiah. We have believed in Jesus, the Christ, to be justified by faith in His work rather than any of our own attempts to follow every law. We understand that the law itself cannot be completely kept—not every single one, therefore, it's humanly impossible. That's why we need Jesus.

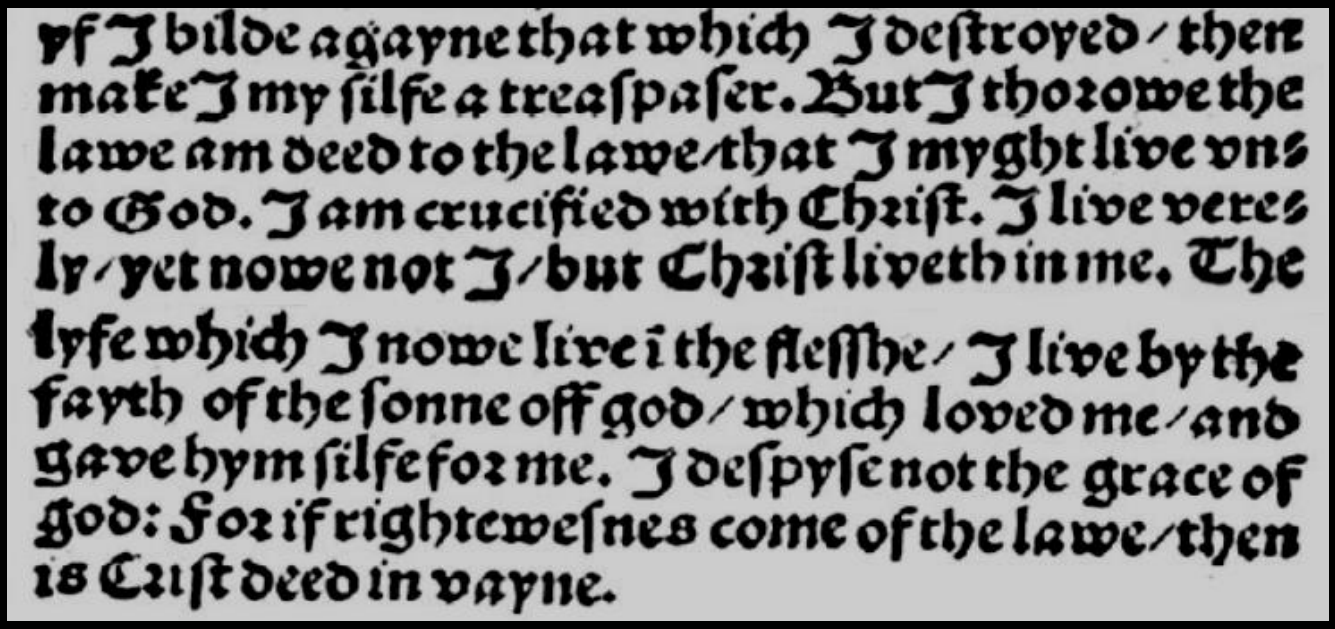
So, does that mean because we do sin, despite our best efforts, Christ is pro-sin. No Way! It makes no sense to build what's destroyed. My sin is destroyed through Christ—as he lives within me. I live by the faith of the Son of God. Since Christ has done the ultimate sacrifice, it would be totally absurd to say righteousness comes from obeying every single law. That would mean Christ's death and suffering was pointless. That way of thinking—righteousness

from law-keeping, is a frustration of the precious grace of God. Actually, according to earlier version, it's anti-grace. That mentality, or practice, is at war against and hates the grace of God.

1526 Tyndale



gentyls / knowe thatt a man is nott iustified by
the dedes off the lawe: but by the fayth of Jesus
Christ: and we have beleved on Jesus Christ /
that we myght be iustified by the fayth of Christ
& not by the dedes of the lawe: be cause that noo
flesshe shalbe iustified by the dedes of the lawe.
¶ Yf thē whill we seke to be made rightewes by
Christ / we oure selves are foūde synners / is not
thē Christ the minister of sinne? god forbid. For



yf I bilde agayne that which I destroyed / then
make I my silfe a treaspaser. But I thorowe the
lawe am deed to the lawe / that I myght live vnto
to God. I am crucified with Christ. I live veres
ly / yet nowe not I / but Christ liveth in me. The
lyfe which I nowe live i the flesshe / I live by the
fayth of the sonne off god / which loved me / and
gave hym silfe for me. I despyse not the grace of
god: For if righteweesnes come of the lawe / then
is Crist deed in vayne.

Know that a men is not justified by the deeds of the law: but by the faith of Jesus Christ: and we have believed on Jesus Christ / that we might be

justified by the faith of Jesus Christ and not by the deeds of the law: because that no flesh shall be justified by the deeds of the law.

If then while we seek to be made righteous by Christ / we ourselves are found sinners / is not the Christ the minister of sin: God forbid. For if I build again that which I destroyed / then make I myself a tresspassor. But I through the law am dead to the law / that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ. I live verily / yet now not I / but Christ liveth in me. The life which I now live in the flesh / I live by the faith of the Son of God / which loved me / and gave himself for me. I despise not the grace of God: for if righteousness come of the law / then is Christ dead in vain.

AKJV's "Transgress" vs. 1526 Tyndale's "Tresspass" (verse 18)

Transgress – disobey, go astray, break the rules, do wrong

Trespass – intrude, impose, interfere

AKJV's "Frustrate" vs. 1526 Tyndale's "Despise" (verse 21)

Frustrate – aggravate, irritate, upset, disturb, annoy, bother, discourage

Despise – loathe; scorn, look down on, hate

Get a Better Understanding of Verse 18 and 21
by Utilizing an Earlier Version:

If I rebuild what I've torn down, then I'm imposing my own doctrine over the doctrine of Christ. In other words, if I do not accept Christ's atonement as full payment for my sins, then I'm deciding I know what's best and God does not.

That would mean I would be intruding over onto Christ's lane by saying Christ's work is insufficient and that I really must keep the law to be justified. To do that would mean I'm interfering with what Scripture says about Christ's work. It would actually mean I hate the grace of God.



May 25

Isaiah 9:6
"The Government Will Be On His Shoulder? Huh?"

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

In considering what it may mean for "the government to be on his shoulder", I decided to do a brief online search.

There were various explanations but 3 things stood out for me:

1) Christ did not teach or practice any particular political "party" or nationalistic lifestyle. Therefore, this biblical passage has nothing to do with left or right wing or any political ideology.

2) The government, as in responsibility of governing, will be on HIS shoulder—not on ours.

3) As with much of Scripture, it's spiritual; not physical. Christ has a spiritual government whereby he is in power.

That's good enough for the moment. I trust that Holy God will reveal to me anything else I may need to understand on the matter.

May 26

Matthew 6:9

"Prayer—Focus On"

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.		
1	"After This Manner"	"This manner" is a general guideline, method, or template. Prayers should include certain parts or criteria. Do it like this.
2	"Pray Ye"	Biblical prayer is communicating with God. Prayer includes speaking to God in sincerity.
Also, a part of communicating with God through prayer is being spiritually in sync enough to listen—to really hear what God is revealing. God-honoring prayer requires personal discipline and submission to the Holy Ghost. You pray. "Pray Ye." You do it. Don't wait for deacon, elder, bishop, or prophet... to do it. It's a command. Prayer is not only your right, it's also your responsibility.		
3	"Our"	True Believers; those who seek God's will more than their own desires. "Our" refers to those who pursue Holy God—His person, purpose, and will.

4	"Father"	The caring hearer who is able and willing to guide. Similar to a *GOOD* earthly parent, this Father loves and cares for His own.

He disciplines and corrects though it may appear to hurt the children. He knows more about the future than the children knows and warns them for the purpose of protecting them.

Question: What of those who have never known an earthly father or who, through death, have lost one? What about those who have been abandoned or abused by a biological or step-father? How should anyone in those situations view this? How can a victim of a poor or absent male role model, particularly an earthy "father" overcome that pain caused by him and still connect to a heavenly "Father"?

"Father" needs to be viewed in light of Creator's CHARACTER. It's not about the word "father" itself or gender, but rather, we must all see that it is God's nature which is important. We should understand and focus on the qualities of God as one who feels our pains, losses, and disappointments; as provider, comforter, loving disciplinarian, fixer, one who has wisdom and foresight, a kind and deep listener, etc.

The Lord's prayer is a template; it's a model—not a

prayer to be repeated in place of or in exchange for personal prayer.		
5	“Art In”	Currently present (open for the business of communication), available to you, willing
6	“Heaven”	In a place and position of authority and power
7	“Hallowed”	Hallowed is defined as: holy, revered, anointed, blessed, consecrated, dedicated, divine, honored, sacred, sanctified, unprofaned.
8	“thy Name”	God’s character, makeup, personality, spirit, essence, nature

Note: Do we know God’s proper name(s)?

Knowing that some humans already use the name “GOD” in vain—in irreverence, what might happen if God’s most sacred names were known?

May 27

Colossians 3:17

"Daily Whatsoever"

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Oh, how lives would be made so much better were Believers to interact daily as Colossians 3:17 Saints!

In disagreements, our words would be more kind. Our responses to hurt, accusations, and insults would be more understanding and forgiving. Our entertainment would be much more selective and so would our associations with individuals and groups. How we viewed and handled money would be more compassionate and eternity-focused. Our diets and daily practices would be more god-honoring. Whatever we did would be entirely improved, by biblical standards, from the way many live who profess to love God!

Can a true Believer continuously watch movies or TV series' which are filled with filthy language and even filthier practices and honestly say, I'm doing this "in the name of Jesus"?

Not long ago, I was thinking about media and why I was just so bored and annoyed with most of it (including streaming TV shows, movies, online games, music, books, and even audio books). Here's what came to mind:

Examining MEDIA: (Top Westernized)

• Pornography, Particular Sexual "Lifestyles" & Addictions

Specific agendas are pushed and encouraged as acceptable, normal, and even preferred. Anyone who disagrees with whatever is presented is made to look as if they are being hateful, ignorant, intolerant and bigoted. Alcohol, for example, is strongly promoted as the most common way of addressing fatigue, anxiety, stress, depression and loneliness. The introduction and encouragement of drinking alcoholic beverages is even in children's shows. Anyone who speaks against it is frowned upon in media.

• Weak Parental Figures

Parents are almost always portrayed as being uninformed weaklings who rely on the wisdom of their children, whom they often idolize. Fathers, when present, are usually completely selfish, clueless, and uninvolved. The media's message to children is to distrust

and disrespect parents (especially those who try to instill biblical values). The push is for children to disregard any guidance they give. The message to adults is to love your kids by letting them go their own ways—regardless to how dangerous a choice may be for their lives physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

- **"Racism" and Sexism**

There are ongoing stereotypical divisions based on skin shades and ethnicities as well as gender. There is an outright absence of certain groups of people or an ongoing disrespect toward them, when they are present at all. They, more often than not, have roles which exemplify and promote self-hatred and disgust toward others who look the same. They are very, very rarely presented as kind or gentle or as loyal, honest, wholesome, respectable, respectful, intelligent, godly human beings. Many are almost always shown to be foul-mouthed, hypocritical church-goers.

- **Violence**

Senseless, impossible, and exaggerated fighting, maiming, and killing dominate books, games, and movies. Seldom are real-life consequence of rage and violence shown.

Revenge is the most common theme. This, by design, increases the appetite, in some viewers, for violence, horror, and mayhem.

- **Sacrilege**

All things are distinctly anti-God or cleverly mixed messages are injected into scripts to promote distrust and mockery primarily against Christianity. Very rarely is this technique done against any other belief system. Media is very much pro-occultism and pro-satanism.

- **"New Age".** Eastern philosophies are pushed vehemently in everything. Even children are not spared from the flood of all things associated with Universalism and other anti-Bible beliefs and lifestyles.

- **Overtly Crude Scenes.** Compared to what was shown just a few years ago, there is a greater frequency of vividly gory scenes and blatant disrespect (especially toward certain people). This is happening even in shows that start off as mild and family-friendly. Even in re-makes of classic G-rated movies and shows, there are now explicit bathroom scenes which amplify sights and sounds of

bodily fluids and bodily functions.

- **Poverty vs. Wealth.** Scripts are set to entice poor people to pursue wealth, by any means. Writers quite often employ the technique of comparing extreme poverty to extreme wealth. This motivates some to crave money to the point of envy, depression, or pursuit of illegal activities.

- **Repetition.** Total Lack of Originality. Renaming repeats—same script with a different cast…and always more gory and more profane.

- **The Flip.** I don't know what the technical term for it may be, if there is one, but it's the method of devaluing/demonizing truth.

This is done in two ways. The first way is for a fact to be stated (as part of the script) by one character. Then, though the statement is actually true, another actor will immediately counter it with an opposing, mocking opinion and leave the latter as fact. This is done because the writers actually disagree with the factual statement but present it for the sole purpose of refuting it in a crafty way.

The second way this technique is used is for an actor to state the fact, with which the writers really disagree, then use laugh tracks (group-think) and/or negative body language of the other characters to show group disapproval. This makes the truth seem to be a silly joke and something the viewer is to be ashamed of feeling.

Writers deliberately negate the factual statement by use of mockery and peer pressure. This practice is so incredibly subtle and goes so deeply into the subconscious that most don't even recognize an insult to themselves or to their own beliefs has been made.

Can we continually watch and/or practice these types of media-*teachings* which is the world's doctrine and mind-control *PROGRAMMING* while proclaiming we are living "in the name of Jesus"? Even if we may not readily recognize these techniques and common media practices, can't we be more aware of whatsoever we do? Can we do whatever we do, in good conscience, "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God"?

May 28

Acts 4:10-12

"None Other? No Other Name?"

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

What of those in countries where people do not hear the name "J-E-S-U-S"?

What about those who cannot speak at all?

When these words were first said, there was no English language and "Jesus" was not pronounced as it is in English. How could Jesus be the correct name and the only name for salvation?

Here's where so many miss the most important point. It's not the word as a proper name that is soul-saving; it is the spirit. If the specific name and pronunciation were the key, Scripture would not have said... "another

Jesus". It's the same word—the same name, but not the same spirit. Look at the account of "The 7 sons of Sceva" to see how the name of Jesus is not some magical incantation. It's not the "name", as in one proper name, but rather the PERSON of Jesus...the relationship with Jesus.

May 29

Jeremiah 17:5

"Total Trust in Another Human?"

Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

This was not Paul speaking. This was not any other writer. This was and is a message from the Creator himself. The person who trusts solely in another person is cursed.

It is curse-like and harmful to trust too deeply in humans and to put anyone in the place of God. Humans are capable of leaving God and influencing others to do so. Do not make flesh your arm. Don't make humans your strength.

May 30

Galatians 1:6-9

"2 Quick 2 Bail"

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto

another gospel: [7] Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. [8] But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. [9] As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Why would the writer say "another" gospel then say it's "not another" gospel? I think this is said because he is trying to express the fact that it is not altogether different so that it would be recognizable immediately; but rather similar to a counterfeit bill, it looks the same though it actually is another kind of currency—that of the fake kind. The real gospel has been "troubled" and "perverted". It's been corrupted and counterfeited.

The problem, then and is now, is that too many people do not know how to discern spirits behind or within people and words. They hear something that sounds sweet, soothing, uplifting or prosperity-making and, without a second thought, just jump ship. They are quick to bail. They hurry to the good-looking prophet who knows how to turn a phrase or the successful pastor who lives out

by the lake.

They can't tolerate the "nobody" who not only does not have a big following, but who does not have a congregation at all. Though he/she may teach and practice sound doctrine/truth, since they don't have the numbers in subscribers, likes, and followers they are, therefore, not worthy (in the opinion of too many who profess to know and love Messiah).

The criteria that is of value should be truth, holiness, and sound doctrine, but for many it's appearance, gain, popularity, comfort, etc. It's about who's who and status. Nonetheless, Scripture warns that even if "an angel from heaven" were to preach another gospel, we are to reject that gospel and consider the person "accursed". But how can one know what "gospel" is the right "gospel"?

You have to actually know what the GOSPEL is in the first place. You cannot tell what is counterfeit unless you first know what is REAL. And you cannot know what is real unless you get away from the alluring, fake anti-gospel doctrines which are so shiny and so popular.

May 31

Proverbs 28:26

"Follow Your Heart?!"

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

I know it doesn't sound "positive" so it won't be accepted by most, but the fact is the human heart, the deepest desires of human beings, are deceptive and wicked (see Jeremiah 17:9).

June 1

Mark 1:40-45

"Faith? Totally! Obedience? Ah, Not!"

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. 42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. 43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; 44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. 45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze

abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter. [Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 5:12-16]

Like the man who was healed of leprosy, sometimes we can be full of hope and faith in Jesus' abilities to help us but we just can't seem to follow his instructions. Why is that?

Because the newly healed man did not keep quiet about the healing as Jesus told him to do, Jesus "could no more openly enter into the city". Do we also hinder the movement of Christ in our lives, and possibly in the lives of others, by our disobedience?

June 2

Isaiah 55:12

"Poetic, But Not a Promise of Prosperity"

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

These are beautiful words but out of context, they could easily be misapplied to create unrealistic expectations. It happens frequently. Go deeper. Verses may be poetic, but are not

necessarily promises of prosperity or for you.

June 3

Matthew 28:19

"Go?"

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Issues to Consider:

- ✓To whom was this directive spoken?
- ✓What might have been the purpose of these words then?
- ✓Were they meant for only those to whom they were directly spoken?
- ✓Were the words only intended for Jews, males, or males at that time only?
- ✓Do they apply to Believers today?
- ✓Can ALL Believers go into "all the world"?
- ✓Can everyone be baptized, including those in nursing homes, foreign prisons, or in other types of places where there is limited access to water or other services or where Christianity is forbidden?
- ✓What was meant by "baptizing"— sprinkled with water? submerged with water?

June 4

John 13:34,35

"THEIR Proof of Who YOU Really Are"

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

In a hateful, perverted, and cruel world, one might think those who call themselves "Christians" would be a light, an example, of the biblical lifestyle—that they would have this single principle solidified in understanding and, therefore, in behavior. Sorry. No, that is not the case.

Generally speaking, the *brethren* seem to have not received the memo. Maybe they are false brethren (and 'sisteren'). Maybe that's why they do not "have love one to another" and maybe that's at least one reason people who believe themselves to be good Christian church-folk, can't seem to simply show love. Many don't even seem to know they *SHOULD* be showing love. HOW to do so isn't even a thought for them.

Jesus taught that the way Believers treat one

another, their love one to another, is the way "men" (people; other humans) recognize or identify people who profess to be Believers as legitimate Believers. People know real disciples, followers, of Christ by this test—"if you have love one to another". And how will they know what love you have unless you SHOW it?

If, on the other hand, you show greed, pride, selfishness, hatred, strife, envy, etc, (the works of the flesh; Galatians 5) they'll think and say you're a hypocrite and a phony and definitely NOT a Believer or in any way a follower of Christ. If you don't follow the teachings of Christ, how are you a "Christian"?

Are they Believers because they regularly attends church? Is a person automatically a child of the most High because he or she was born having a certain shade of skin or was born into a wealthy family? Is a person a follower of Christ because someone said they were since being baptized?

Regardless to what one calls themselves or another person, it does not make them a true anything. So no one is a true disciple of Christ unless there is proof of who they really are in the action of love toward each other.

June 5

Ecclesiasticus 2:15-18

"Most High is More Merciful Than Men"

15 They that fear the Lord, will not disobey his word, and they that love him, will keep his ways. 16 They that fear the Lord, will seek that which is well pleasing unto him, and they that love him, shall be filled with the law. 17 They that fear the Lord, will prepare their hearts, and humble their souls in his sight: 18 Saying, we will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men: for as his majesty is, so is his mercy.

In His majesty and mercy, God will treat us far better than humans.

June 6

Proverbs 2:1-9

"Value and Seek Wisdom & Understanding"

1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his

mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

Wisdom and understanding must be pursued. "She", wisdom, doesn't chase you; you have to chase "her".

Connectivity:

Incline Your Ear to Wisdom
Apply Your Heart to Understanding
Receive God's Words
Hide God's Commandments Within Yourself
Cry for Knowledge
Seek as if for Silver & Treasures
Understand the Fear of the LORD
Understand Righteousness, Judgment, Equity

June 7

Ecclesiasticus 3:28

"No Fix. Not Even Punishment"

In the punishment of the proud there is no remedy: for the plant of wickedness hath taken root in him.

For some, not even punishments will change

them. There is no remedy, no cure, for those who are truly proud. They pride themselves in their pride. Nothing will change their prideful ways because wickedness is deeply rooted within them. They are incorrigible and determinedly corrupt.

Nothing short of destruction will stop them. So why aren't they just destroyed? The wheat must grow with the tares—for a time (Matthew 13:24-30). But at their end, they will have no excuse and their eternal punishment will be undeniably justified.



June 8

John 4:10, 11

"Do You Know Who You're Talkin' To?"

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Jesus told the woman if she really knew to whom she spoke, her response would have been different. Sometimes, we don't really know who or what we're dealing with

(spiritually speaking). We're often looking right at a person without knowing what spirit is in operation. We are too frequently unaware that the spirit within the person is ungodly. Sometimes, also, our conversation is so carnal, so worldly, when, if we only knew who we were talking to, it might be more spiritual.

Even in our prayers, often we're so casual and irreverent that it's as if we're not communing with the living God of living water. *[John 7:38; Revelation 7:17]*.

We need to be discerning. We need to be spiritual-minded. We need to be aware of to whom we are speaking.

June 9

Proverbs 1:5

"Signs of the Wise"

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

It seems so basic. Wise people listen to wise advice. That, in part, makes them wise. One might be surprised that many won't listen to wise counsel. They won't even give it a chance, especially if it's not what they want to hear or if it's not the popular, "make yourself happy"

message of today's times. If the advice is not "positive" (self-gratifying), they won't listen to the best, safest, wisest, or most godly advice ever. A sign of a wise person is that she or he will hear and will hear more and will learn more and more from accessing wise advice and instruction.



June 10

Revelation 14:1

"Lamb's Father's Name"

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

For Thought:

Who are (or will be) these 144,000?

Is this to be understood as a literal number or, rather, is it symbolic?

Who is this "Lamb" that stood on Mt. Zion and what is "his Father's name" that is written in their foreheads?

Should it say "on" rather than "in" their foreheads? How can something be written "in" a forehead? Is this a way of saying their minds will be "stamped" in that they will be, in a way, branded or so deeply committed that they "belong" to the Lamb?

June 11

Ecclesiasticus 4:29

“Lot of Mouth - Little Biz”

Be not hasty in thy tongue, and in thy deeds slack and remiss.

How is it that sometimes some people can talk so very much but do so very little? Many make promises and say they are determined to do this or that, but just don’t follow through. Diet and exercise is a clear example. Especially in westernized places, people say they will exercise daily, but within weeks of that proclamation, they have missed days and those days turn into weeks and months of inactivity.

It has been said that “talk is cheap”. Well, this simple passages somewhat confirms that. At least it warns against cheap talk. Don’t be quick to run your mouth but slow, or lax, about handling your business.

June 12

Ecclesiasticus 4:26

“Confession”

Be not ashamed to confess thy sins, and force not the course of the river.

The first part of this verse is fairly straightforward. Don’t be embarrassed about

confessing your sins. However, what does the latter part of the verse mean?

To me, forcing the course of the river is what happens when people do not humble themselves to God and confess, either to God or others (or both). By refusing to confess, that forces a progression of situations or reactions to your behavior. It's making some bad thing happen that could have been avoided.

For example, something unfortunate may be in line to happen and, rather than slowing or deterring it, you, by not confessing your sins, compel that heavy flow of unpleasantness to occur.

Let's say you're driving and you run a stop light. Law enforcement stops you and tells you what you did wrong. By acknowledging your wrongdoing (confessing), you may be given only a warning, but by being belligerent and uncooperative (forcing the course of the river), you're setting yourself up for a ticket or something worse.

Sometimes, confession, is just a good, right, and even a very helpful thing. Sometimes confession relieves both victim as well as perpetrator. Confession can be good for the soul.

June 13

Proverbs 12:22

"Abomination or Delight?"

Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.

Lying. It's just the most common thing in media, ministry, government, etc. Where is it not happening? Who deals truly? Even so, Scripture gives us a choice. Any of us can choose to be an abomination to the LORD by having lying lips or we can deal truly and be God's delight.

June 14

Ecclesiasticus 4:20, 21

"Pay Attention"

Observe the opportunity, and beware of evil, and be not ashamed when it concerneth thy soul.

Pay attention to what's happening
and be on the alert regarding evil,
harmful situations. Notice potentially
evil conditions as well.
Do not be ashamed of being inquisitive.
Don't fear being called *nosey*
whenever circumstances
involve your soul. Pay attention.

June 15

John 8:58

"I Am"

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Wow. Just that statement alone is packed with power and authority. Jesus, who was born long after Abraham died, was stressing that he existed before Abraham.

June 16

Ecclesiasticus 5:1-7

"Got it Goin' On Much?"

1 Set not thy heart upon thy goods, and say not, I have enough for my life. 2 Follow not thine own mind, and thy strength, to walk in the ways of thy heart: 3 And say not, Who shall control me for my works? for the Lord will surely revenge thy pride. 4 Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath happened unto me? for the Lord is long suffering, he will in no wise let thee go. 5 Concerning propitiation, be not without fear to add sin unto sin. 6 And say not, His mercy is great, he will be pacified for the multitude of my sins: for mercy and wrath come from him, and his indignation resteth upon sinners. 7 Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day: for suddenly shall the wrath of the

Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance.

This passage is saying:
Oh, so you think you've got it going on? You think you have everything you need in life? [Though it's what the world teaches to do], do not follow your own mind or depend on your own strength so that you walk in the ways of your own heart.

Don't think no one can control you or make you face the consequences of your actions. God can address your pride. Don't say, "see I have sinned and nothing's happened to me". Though the Lord puts up with a lot sometimes, he will not let you keep getting away with your mess.

Oh, so you're not afraid to make things worse—adding sin to sin? Because God is very merciful, you think he's okay with your sin and will only punish really, really bad sinners? Don't count on that. Go on and turn to God. His anger could fall on you at any time during your false security.

In short, don't take God's meekness for weakness. God sees. As it has been said in the past, "Your time is coming. You'll get yours".

June 17

John 12:28

"Father, YOU Glorify YOUR Name"

Father, glorify, thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it, and will glorify it again.

Note: I see this as showing God's glory in the past, present, and future. I think it may also points to specific events in time. For example, the words, "will glorify it again", may refer to Jesus' suffering and death for the sins of the world or it may have a connection to an end-time prophecy.

Questions:
1) What glorifies Heavenly Father's Name? Should we attempt to glorify it and how?
2) Why would God glorify His own name and what does that really mean?

June 18

Ephesians 1:3

"Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Places"

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

For thought:

These are beautiful words— "…spiritual blessings in heavenly places…", but in what way are they such? How are we benefitted by them?

At least in one way, this lets us know that there are good things happening of which we are completely unaware. Just as there is spiritual warfare whereby we do not wrestle with flesh and blood (Ephesians 6), there are spiritual blessings in heavenly places that are bestowed upon us.

We don't see everything happening. We don't know when God has protected us from some spiritual and/or physical attack.

June 19

Ephesians 5:7,11

"Unfruitful Works of Darkness"

[7] Be not ye therefore partakers with them. [11] And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

REPROVE: criticize, take to task, accuse, rebuke, reprimand

Believers are not to be part of or in fellowship with unproductive (unbeneficial to godliness) acts of wickedness.

June 20

Acts 16:13-18

“Hidden Evil Spirits Mixed In”

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. 16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

How “many days” will it be before true Believers recognize and are grieved by the evil spirits that

are among themselves—within their fellowships and families? Who will exercise the power of God and have the courage to cast them out? Is it that the evil is not distinguishable from the good because the leaders, themselves, are evil? Are there more who are "possessed with a spirit of divination" than there are who "worshipped God"?



June 21

Ecclesiasticus 4:22

"People Praise"

Accept no person against thy soul, and let not the reverence of any man cause thee to fall:

I wish I had known and understood this many years ago. "No person". That means no one at all regardless to their status—even close connections such as family relationships, should be permitted to cause you to fall from godliness. Do not allow any human being to work your mind against yourself. Do not let your reverence of ANY person push you to do wrong or to make decisions that will cause you soul-injury.

Didn't Jesus rhetorically ask the true definition of family, including mother? Didn't he answer by saying only those who do the will of His Father are mother, brother, etc?

Never let high feelings toward anyone, regardless to

who they are, how close to you they are, how well respected they are... to cause you to fall from full faith and obedience to God. Avoid people praise.

June 22

John 14:6

"I AM: The Way, The Truth, & The Life"

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Does, as some contend, "THE" in *the way*, *the truth*, and *the life*, really mean "one" or "a". Is Jesus just one of many ways to the Father?

Many Christians may find it hard to believe that this verse could garner vehement hatred from others, especially those who also call themselves Christian. The reality is that the belief in Jesus as the only way to the Father, has, does, and will continue to be a major issue—not only for those who openly reject Jesus as the Messiah and Savior, but also among many who are associated with Christianity .

June 23

1 Peter 1:13

"Secure Your Mind & Hope To The End"

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is

to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

There are so many issues, distractions, and temptations in the world that it's very, very easy to go off track mentally. This passage exhorts to pull your mind together, secure it, and be sober (alert, aware and certainly not inebriated). We are to "hope to the end..." That means to not stop hoping. For what? Hoping for the grace that we're going to receive. When? We'll get it at the revelation of Jesus Christ. That's when Jesus is revealed.

 **June 24**

Matthew 22:29

"How To Do it Wrong"

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

How to do life wrong? How to think and live in error? Jesus said it's by 1) not knowing the Scriptures and 2) not knowing the power of God. Plainly, that's how to do it, live this life, wrongly.

 **June 25**

Ecclesiasticus 2:16

"When You WANT To"

They that fear the Lord, will seek that which is well pleasing unto him, and they that love him,

shall be filled with the law.

Here's a SELF Check-up:

Do you really "fear the Lord"? Do you have a very high regard for God as Lord of your life—not just in word, but rather as indicated by your actions? Do you really—I mean for really, really, real love God? Do you look to find out what is pleasing to God? Do you consciously and purposefully search to know what God wants? Do you intentionally saturate yourself in God's guidelines for living?

Do you cringe when you hear phrases about God's "law"? Does the very word "law" bring thoughts of oppression and old ridiculous rules designed to control and restrict? Do the phrases "God's law" and "the law of the Lord" make you uncomfortable? Or rather, does it give you an appreciation for God's care and guidance?

Adults, at least those in North America, aren't forced to do any religious activity. You can decide for yourself your relationship with God.

So, you may reject it all— as the world encourages. You don't have to seek what pleases God and you don't have to be filled with God's law. However, if you do choose that way, it's only if and when you WANT to.

June 26

Zephaniah 2:3

“Seek”

Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger.

While many others in Scripture do, this writer does not give a guarantee in this passage. Instead, he says, “it may be” that you will be “hid” or hidden and protected during the time of the Lord’s anger.

Even so, “all” who are “meek of the earth”, were advised to seek the LORD, to seek righteousness, and to seek meekness.

June 27

Isaiah 8:11-13

“Don't Fear What They Fear”

11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, 12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

DON'T "walk in the way of this people" = thinking as the worldly environment dictates—behaving as systems teach (including public education, mainstream education, mainstream religion, and most media).

DON'T say, "a confederacy" = joining and encouraging the joining of various political or social groups in order to gain control.

DON'T "fear" or "be afraid" = being scared of what's happening in the world, particularly the political climate

DO "sanctify the lord of hosts himself" = allowing holy God to make and keep you holy (in thought and action)

DO "let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" = being very concerned about God's requests, actions, consequences, judgments. Care more about what God thinks than what humans are thinking and doing.

June 28

Ecclesiasticus 4:23,24

"Say It"

[23] And refrain not to speak, when there is occasion to do good, and hide not thy wisdom in her beauty. [24] For by speech wisdom shall be

known, and learning by the word of the tongue.

Share words of wisdom when there is opportunity to do so. It's a good thing. Do not hide wisdom "in her beauty" by just having it and never spreading it. It's by verbalizing that wisdom is made known. People can learn by hearing "the word of the tongue".

Don't just think it. Don't just know it. In some cases, don't even just write it. Say it. Of course, you still need to be lead by God regarding who to, when to, where to, and how to tell wisdom. There should be a balance of not hoarding wisdom and yet not throwing pearls to swine (Matthew 7:6).



June 29

Isaiah 31:4

"Fearless LORD will Fight"

For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

The Lord is unafraid of multitudes (masses, big groups). God is unafraid of intimidating voices or noises. The Lord will fight for the mountain and the hill within the mountain.

Whether this speaks of a fulfilled prophecy or one that is still expected, a significant point is that the LORD is fearless in fighting. Neither multitudes nor threatening sounds are of concern.

In addition to prophecy, this verse can also be seen as a message to Believers to not be afraid of huge numbers of people or crowds when they are against us. We should also not be fretful of "their voice" (any hurtful or threatening words). We should not "abase" (demean, humiliate, belittle) ourselves in fear of their bullying, terrorizing, or discouragement.

June 30

Ecclesiasticus 4:31

"A Money-management Principle"

Let not thine hand be stretched out to receive, and shut when thou shouldest repay.

This is a good way to live. Be just as quick to pay a debt as you are to create one.

July 1

Romans 16:17,18

"Mark & Avoid"

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and

by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

It's terribly sad how this passage is so often misused, especially in cults and cult-like so-called churches. When people start to think for themselves and investigate the personal lives of their leaders and what they are really saying in contrast and comparison to rightly divided Scripture, they are hit across the head with a misapplication of these verses. They are told to stay away from anyone who is different or who thinks differently from their leaders.

It is often their religious/cult leaders who do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ and instead serve "their own belly" by cheating the people out of their money and keeping them in mental, financial, and spiritual bondage. Indeed, they use "good words and fair speeches" to deceive.

They are the ones who should be marked and avoided because *THEY* cause divisions and offenses but too many people do not know biblical doctrine so they fall for the scripture-twisting. They reject sound, chain-breaking, freedom-making knowledge and wisdom and continue to accept the deception. The doctrine they have learned consists of blatant and subtle lies but they are told to stick to *that*

because its “the doctrine they have learned”. They mark and avoid those who would have them set free so they would no longer be deceived.

It’s a dreadful shame that such occurs and all too often. Obtain copies of the oldest text we have as Scripture which is Textus Receptus (1611 KJV, Geneva, Matthew’s, Great Bible, Coverdale). Actually read them. Seek God, not preachers, for understanding. Then, mark and avoid any and all cult-like, unbiblical thinking.



July 2

Ecclesiasticus 5:9-10

“Dabbling & Kicking Up Dust”

[9] Winnow not with every wind, and go not into every way: for so doth the sinner that hath a double tongue. [9] Be stedfast in thy understanding, and let thy word be the same.

- WINNOW: Blow a current of air [in farming terminology] through grain in order to remove the chaff; blow something away until you are left with what you want.

- LITERARY: Blow through. For example: The autumn wind is winnowing its way through the grass.

Don’t go running around dabbling in this and that wind of doctrine. Be steady and solid in understanding and your words will reflect emotional

and doctrinal stability. How you think and talk is the same as what you 'get into'.

People who dip and dabble in "every wind" and "every way" have a "double tongue" which is shown as wishy-washy, unstable, always uncertain and easily changeable attitudes and actions.

July 3

Titus 2:11, 12

"Grace 2 Salvation 2 All"

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Is this one of the clearest proofs, possibly the best evidence, that every single person "all men" have a chance to accept "the grace of God that brings salvation"?

Maybe there is something inherently within us ALL (regardless to culture, education, location, personal experience, ethnicity, time in history or any other factor) that teaches to:

† deny ungodliness

† deny worldly lusts

† live soberly

† live righteously

† live godly

Is it possible that while some choose to hear and attempt to follow that inward teaching, others suppress, reject, and deny that same message ("the grace of God that brings salvation") which has "appeared to ALL" humankind—to all people; to everyone?



July 4

Ecclesiasticus 3:18-20

"The Lowly High"

18 The greater thou art, the more humble thyself, and thou shalt find favour before the Lord. 19 Many are in high place and of renown: but mysteries are revealed unto the meek. 20 For the power of the Lord is great, and he is honored of the lowly.

Though a basic biblical principle, it is despised and seldom practiced in today's societies, especially in westernized cultures. The higher you go up the social ladder, the more you should humble yourself "before

the Lord".

Many are socially connected, well respected, or "special", but "mysteries" are made known to the "meek". It's the lowly who honor the Lord who have great power.

July 5

Hebrews 2:1-4

"How Shall We Escape If We Neglect So Great Salvation?"

1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

There are
deep meanings
in this passage
which are too often overlooked:

✞ "THE WORD" was spoken by the angels.
✞ "Salvation" FIRST BEGAN
to be spoken by the Lord.
✞ Witnesses confirmed what was said.
✞ God further confirmed the authority
with signs, wonders, various miracles
and gifts of the Holy Ghost.

With all that backing, support, authorization, and proof, how could we possibly escape the penalty for sin, if we disregard salvation? Angels were credible when they declared that "every transgression and disobedience" was set to receive a fair "recompense of reward"—a payment. So, how could we even *think* we don't have to pay IF we just throw away the free pass of salvation?

With all this evidence, we have no rational reason to *think* we can avoid the penalty of sin while tossing out, disregarding, & bypassing salvation. So we ought to pay very close attention to scriptures and not let solid truth slip away from our hearts and minds.

So, a very important question was asked:
How can we possibly escape, damnation, if we neglect so great salvation? The answer is that we cannot.

July 6

Romans 3:23-31

"The Law of Faith"

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

That is powerful! It's so disregarded and/or so misunderstood, but so precious when accepted and believed.

Everyone has sinned. No one measures to the

level of worthiness of God's glory. However, sin is made right; it's freely fixed by God's grace through the rescue and recovery that is "in Christ Jesus".

God has designated Jesus to be the payment for sin. It is through faith in Jesus' blood that righteousness is brought about. God holds back the penalty for sin. He restrains Himself from executing the rightful punishment. God affirms that the blood of Jesus is the righteousness capable of wiping away sins.

God establishes the justness of Jesus and also that Jesus is the "justifier" of whomever believes in Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the one who fixes, cleans up, makes right, or wipes the slate of those who believe in him.

So, seeing it is God who designed it and Jesus who fulfilled it, what have you got to be proud about? Whatever you think you've got to brag about is invalid and useless—"it is excluded". What law do you think saves you? Do you think it's the law of works that save you? Wrong! Salvation comes from the law of faith.

That's why we can say that people are justified by FAITH "without the deeds of the law".

Is God the God of Jews only? Isn't God the God

of Gentiles as well? Of course God is the God of non-Jews too.

So, since it's the one God who justifies souls (concerning circumcision vs. uncircumcision) through faith, does that mean the law is voided because of faith? Of course not. Rather, it means the law is established. In other words, faith establishes the law; it does not abolish it.



July 7

Matthew 7:21-23

"Lord, Lord"

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Is this a pro-works verse which contradicts the grace/faith doctrine? Because of the confusion which I had been taught, at one time I thought so. Now, however, I understand that it is not at all a contradiction of salvation by grace through faith, but rather

a confirmation of it. This verse emphasizes that self-reliance for salvation is an iniquitous work.

At final judgment, God will declare that many, who have done incredible "works" will be very disappointed that their works did not connect them to Him. They will, albeit too late, know that they were dependent upon their works and, in so doing, made themselves (salvation-by-works teachers), their own gods.

In some churches people are being told to pray with a chair in front of them and to talk to that chair as if God were there. They are strongly urged from pulpits to do that sorcerous practice and they do not "try the spirits". They do not "search the scriptures" to find out that such is in no way a biblical practice. They just follow and idolize preachers rather than hearing and obeying the Holy Spirit.

Their replacing of "what pastor said" for Scripture and their value on works rather than relationship with God is the iniquity that they work. They do this while all along saying, "Lord, Lord".

July 8

1 Timothy 4:6
"Good Doctrine"

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

Some in popular "Christianity" (which is not at all biblical Christianity) are teaching against DOCTRINE. The very word is being taught as something bad and wrong. That's, at least in part, because they do not know the GOOD DOCTRINE as spoken of in this verse. They are not good ministers of Jesus Christ. They certainly have not been nourished in the words of faith.

July 9

Hebrews 10:10
"Once For All"

By the which will we are SANCTIFIED through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

"Once for all"? Does this mean everyone will be saved and is heaven bound?

Think about it this way. A world-renown chef

announces that a unique delicacy will be prepared only one time and that it is for everyone. Upon hearing it, some are so excited and readily accept. Others, however, decline. Though the offer is available to every single person, that does not negate the right to choose. The opportunity is available to everyone, but that does not mean everyone will accept. Just because something is "there" for everyone, does not mean everyone will take it.

Everyone has the opportunity to be sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. Everyone can, but not everyone will.

The offering of the body of Jesus the Christ was made one time and was made available to every person—once for all.



July 10

Job 28:28

"Wisdom & Understanding"

And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is WISDOM; and to depart from evil is UNDERSTANDING.

The fear of the Lord = wisdom.
To reject evil = understanding.

July 11

Psalm 1:1-2
"Blessed"

1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

At one time I took this passage to be a promise or guarantee from God. I thought that all godly persons, who did not practice the behaviors of the ungodly, would have all their pursuits blessed and made prosperous. The harsh realities of life, in general, has caused me to dig deeper. I now better understand that, as with so many biblical passages, this one is also not a pledge from God. It is a psalm (song) and/or poetry from a human. It is not a "word from the Lord" or "thus saith the Lord" and should, therefore, not be read to mean if you meet certain conditions, you will absolutely and always receive pleasantness.

Even without one's personal experiences, the Bible shows countless examples of goodness being punished and evil being rewarded. The biblical warning to "...take heed how you

hear…" has come to mean more and more to me over time. If one misapplies scriptural passages, one is likely to be most surely disappointed.

It is still, however, excellent instruction to not WALK in the counsel of the ungodly—to not accept and apply advice of those who do not hold God as authority. It is still wise to not STAND in the way of sinners—to not behave as those who embrace and practice anti-God ways. It is also still prudent to not SIT in the seat of the scornful—to not be like those who are full of disrespect and contempt.

Further, enjoying study of Scripture and meditating on it is most profitable. However, to take verse 3 (or any verse) to mean everything will always be wonderful and favorable for you if you follow certain guidelines, even biblical ones, is completely incorrect. Simply put, it just doesn't work that way and God never promised it would.

Just because someone is *inspired* to write something and it is included as part of Bible versions does not mean those writings are God's words, or that it is an assurance from God to you personally, or that each word has

been given a stamp of approval by God.

Those who call any Bible version “God's Word” and actually believe every word within its pages is God speaking or are God-ordained will likely reject this. Nonetheless, even a cursory study of the history of Bible versions will show there is no such thing as “THE Bible”. As such, Believers should really be in tune with the Holy Spirit when interpreting what we have as Scripture.

In that walk, in that stand, and in that way one is blessed.



July 12

Acts 17:24, 25

“Border-free God”

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

God is Creator. God made the world and everything that is within it. He is Lord, in authority, of heaven. He is Lord of earth. God is creator and controller of it all.

God does not live in human-constructed religious buildings. Regardless to how expensive, modern, traditional, beautiful, or otherwise considered treasured or important by humans, God does not live in any of them.

God is not worshipped by human hands. This means we, humans, cannot give any tangible thing to God that's worthy of him because God does not need anything. It is God who gives life, breath, and everything to humans. As the saying goes, "What do you give the person who has everything?" God has no use for *stuff* from his own creations. He not only has everything, but has created everything.

July 13

Psalm 7:10

"Defense"

My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.

The writer of this passage says God saves those who are upright in heart.

What is meant by "upright in heart" and are those who are such, *really* defended and saved, and from what?

What's a practical application for this psalm? Is it

primarily poetry and not necessarily a promise or specific message for Believers?

Among many, this is another opportunity for scriptural musing; something to read several times and on which to meditate for clarity.

July 14

John 14:26

"The Comforter Teaches & Reminds"

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Studying the words of Christ, which are the words in red (in many 66-book Bibles) can be exceptionally helpful in *hearing* Messiah's *voice*. The Comforter teaches and reminds Believers how to think and live as real **Christians**—followers of the teachings of Christ.

July 15

Leviticus 20:26

"Divine Division"

And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

In order to be HOLY, true Believers must be SEVERED. And that cutting, breaking, and separation "from other people" really is not a pleasant-feeling process, but it is God's will and by His design.

July 16

Luke 16:15

"Popularity: As God Sees It"

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

You justify yourselves in front of people:

> *We care about the unborn…We feed the poor in Africa… We hold rallies for Christ… We have hundreds of thousands of social media followers and subscribers… We raise money for victims of hurricanes and earthquakes… Our women's hair is long and our men's hair is short and all of our sleeves, dress hems or trouser legs are nice and long… We attend church, temple, or mosque regularly and pay tithes and plus give offerings…*

BUT GOD KNOWS YOUR HEARTS! God sees the worldliness and folly in your day-to-day lives. He knows you're not sincerely studying Scripture personally. He is aware that you do not try (test) the spirits which operate behind what you see, hear, and do—those which invisibly manipulate the visible environment. He is not ignorant of your oppression of people. He sees your deeply rooted hatred for fellow humans because of differing shades of skin or other surface issues. God sees your love for praise, attention, and popularity.

"Highly esteemed among men"
=
"Abomination in the sight of God"

July 17

Ecclesiasticus 43:11

"The Rainbow"

Look upon the rainbow, and praise him that made it, very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof.

In addition to the books of Genesis and Revelations, Ecclesiasticus also speaks of the rainbow. While Genesis tells of the meaning of the rainbow, Revelations expresses one unique

place it will be seen. Ecclesiasticus simply speaks of its brilliance and beauty and urges viewers of the rainbow to “praise Him that made it”.

July 18

Acts 19:11-20

“7 Sons of Sceva”

11 And God **wrought** special miracles by the
hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were
brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons,
and the diseases departed from them, and the
evil spirits went out of them. 13 Then certain of
the **vagabond** Jews, **exorcists**, took upon
them to call over them which had evil spirits the
name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We **adjure** you
by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there
were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief
of the priests, which did so. 15 And **the evil spirit**
answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I
know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom
the evil spirit was leaped on them, and
overcame them, and **prevailed** against them,
so that they fled out of that house **naked and**
wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews
and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear
fell on them all, and **the name of the Lord**
Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that
believed came, and confessed, and shewed
their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used
curious arts brought their books together, and

burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. [20] So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Terms & Thoughts:

Wrought: worked, performed, done; worked into shape by artistry or careful effort; elaborately embellished, ornamented

Adjure: to ask in a demanding tone; command solemnly

Vagabond: a person who wanders from place to place without a home or job; nomad, wanderer, wayfarer, gypsy

Exorcist: a person who expels or attempts to expel an evil spirit

Overcame: gained the upper hand

Prevailed: gained the total victory

These were "special miracles" rather than everyday occurrences. These things were extreme signs of the presence of the Holy Ghost.

The NAME Jesus is not to be used as an incantation (a series of words said as a magic spell or charm). Doing so can have disastrous consequences. Though *the name of Jesus* is powerful, we see from this account, it is not a formula to be used by everyone regardless to motives and individual spirit. Even those who

are skilled in "curious arts" or various spiritual practices should not meddle with the power and authority of Messiah Jesus, whose NAME is "Wonderful"... whose NAME is "Prince of Peace"... whose NAME is "Emmanuel" etc.

Today, many experience spiritual "nakedness" from trying to control God or attempting to use sorceries to imitate the works of the Holy Ghost. This unclothed state is *often* manifested as ills of various forms. Many are "naked" because they do not operate in the Holy Ghost and are, therefore, exposed to the very evil forces they try to manipulate.

When the name of the Lord Jesus is truly magnified, people will do as these new Believers. They will openly confess their wrongful actions. They will also reject and abandon their sorceries, regardless to the financial cost. That is the result of the growth of **the word of God** (which obviously existed long before any Bible which many incorrectly label "the word of God"). A similar response to that of these is what happens when the word of God—God's message and wisdom, really gets the victory in the lives of people.

July 19

Matthew 19:27-29

“Letting It All Go—For What?”

27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Whatever and whomever you’ve FORSAKEN for the cause of FOLLOWING Christ Jesus, you’ll gain many times better than that. That is a direct promise from One who is qualified to make such promise and who is able to keep it.

It’s not poetry or a writer’s musings. It’s not a historical account of something that happened hundreds or thousands of years ago. It’s not a twisting of words for a feel-good emotion. It’s a guarantee. It’s a reason to let it go…let it all go…“family” and fortune included.

July 20

Ecclesiasticus 6:22-29

“Wisdom’s Blessed Bonds”

22 For wisdom is according to her name, and she is not manifest unto many. 23 Give ear, my son, receive my advice, and refuse not my counsel, 24 And put thy feet into her fetters, and thy neck into her chain. 25 Bow down thy shoulder, and bear her, and be not grieved with her bonds. 26 Come unto her with thy whole heart, and keep her ways with all thy power. 27 Search and seek, and she shall be made known unto thee, and when thou hast got hold of her, let her not go. 28 For at the last thou shalt find her rest, and that shall be turned to thy joy. 29 Then shall her fetters be a strong defense for thee, and her chains a robe of glory.

Wisdom is not made known to many though she is a securer. Willingly submit to her for protection and security. Listen. Pay attention to what I’m saying and don’t reject my advice.

Put your feet in her restraints. Let wisdom guide the direction of your steps. Put your neck into her chains to allow wisdom to affect your attitude and behavior. Bow down your shoulder and endure her. Humble yourself to wisdom and revere her.

Approach her with your whole heart. Be completely sincere when coming to her. Keep her ways with all your power. In doing what she says, go hard! Be all in! Search and seek for her. Dig and dig deeper. You'll find her. She'll be revealed to you. When you have her, hold her and don't let go.

You'll finally understand what rest and joy really means. You will find rest which will become joy. That's when you'll really "get it". You'll totally comprehend the value of her influence. You'll appreciate wisdom as your strong defense. Her chains will be to you as a glorious robe.

The pursuit of wisdom is a voluntary godly discipline with rewards. Accept her bonds and receive her blessings.



July 21

Job 4:17

"Just Just"

Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

This is an excellent verse we can recall whenever we, True Believers, may feel as if God's judgments and ways are too harsh or are seem unfair.

From time to time (when we allow ourselves to be really honest about our feelings), we may think we would handle the world differently if we were in charge.

This is a "who do you think you are?" reminder. No matter how bad things may appear or what we may feel or think, we are still mere mortals. As such, we do not know everything and cannot make more just judgments than God.

It's **just** a fact that the Maker is more pure and more **just** than any human could ever be.

July 22

1 Timothy 6:6, 7

"Godliness with Contentment"

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

This is a wonderful anti-stress verse. Sometimes Believers may need to be reminded to let stuff (stresses, fears, frustrations, pressures…) go and that, despite this *get more-more-more* world-think mentality, it's perfectly okay to be in a mental state of godliness with contentment. In fact, we need to

be reminded that such state is “great gain”.

There is an old adage, “You can’t take it with you.” In reference to birth and death, Scripture tells us that we didn’t bring anything into this world and we cannot take anything from this world.

There is a secular song by Tracy Chapman, “Mountains O’ Things”, having the lyrics “...a grave that’s deep and wide enough for me and all my mountains o’ things”. Well, even if all possessions were buried with one’s body, that’s still not taking them where souls go. We really can’t take stuff with us.

If we could really find ourselves living holy lives and never caring about what others do or don’t do, what others may have or don’t have or about what about we don’t have, where we can or can’t go, or what we used to do, etc, we might actually be able to experience godliness with contentment.



July 23

Ecclesiasticus 17:5-7

“Ingredients for Understanding & Discernment”

5 They received the use of the five

operations of the Lord, and in the sixth place he imparted them understanding, and in the seventh, speech, an interpreter of the cogitations thereof. [6] Counsel, and a tongue, and eyes, ears, and a heart, gave he them to understand. [7] Withal, he filled them with the knowledge of understanding, and shewed them good and evil.

Humans have been given attributes so that we may understand and discern. According to this passage, there are 5 senses to help us: counsel (sound doctrine, godly advice), a tongue (to ask questions and seek truth), eyes and ears (to see and hear during searching), a heart (godly spirituality).

Humans have the capability to know and understand and choose between good and evil. Consider how the tree of knowledge of good and evil was placed in the midst of the Garden of Eden. Believers should not be naive and unaware that evil exists. We have been given certain characteristic so that we not be ignorant of Satan's devices.

July 24

Jeremiah 2:13

"2 Evils"

For my people have committed two evils;

they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

God was saying His own people had done these two evil things:

They forsook the real and embraced the fake.

1) They threw out valuable living waters and 2) Made containers that couldn't even hold water.

He was saying that, as so many do today, His own people wanted false gods rather than the true God. They rejected the fresh, freely flowing Living Water. In place of that refreshing everlasting goodness, they created their own pots and bowls that couldn't even hold regular water.

July 25

1 Corinthians 15:33

"Corrupt Communications"

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

This verse MAY be applied to many situations in which bad practices, attitudes, or beliefs can adversely affect those which may seek to live a godly lifestyle. However, when used directly in context with

the rest of the chapter, it is speaking specifically concerning death and resurrection.

There were (and are) those who believed, as some say, “when you're dead, you're done”. They opposed the concept of the physical body dying while the spiritual body continues ongoing awareness or existence.

This verse instructs to not be tricked into accepting any philosophy which states that there is no **hereafter**. It warns of the dangers of embracing any of the anti-resurrection and/or anti-Christ, doctrines as all of them damage good, right, and truthful beliefs. All similar doctrines, including teachings that one can do whatever one wants to do in deliberate disobedience “under grace” with no consequences, are very dangerous. They badly affect the way one thinks and therefore the way one ultimately behaves on a daily basis.

Bad influences, “evil communications”, badly affect or “corrupt”, right thinking and living.

July 26

Acts 14:21, 22

“Continue in the Faith”

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium,

and Antioch, [22] Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Continue in the faith. Through much tribulation, enter the kingdom of God. Where's the part about the easy, name-it-claim-it, "speak-it-into-existence", "create-your-own-reality", pain-free, popular and well-respected, successful, wealthy, problem-free lives?

The Faith =
Much Tribulation >
Enter the Kingdom of God

What? Too "negative"? Maybe that was just for *them* and it's not applicable to present-day Believers? As Paul has written, God forbid.

Again, as with many passages, we have a scripture and realistic picture of what can be expected for those who "continue in THE FAITH".



July 27

Romans 1:16
"Unashamed"

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto

salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The gospel of Christ is powerful
and backed by God.
The gospel of Christ leads to salvation
to EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.
The gospel of Christ is available to
Jews as well as to non-Jews.
The gospel of Christ gives
no reason for shame.

July 28

Ecclesiasticus 1:1-3

"All Wisdom"

1 All wisdom cometh from the Lord, and is with him for ever. 2 Who can number the sand of the sea, and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity? 3 Who can find out the height of heaven, and the breadth of the earth, and the deep, and wisdom?

Here's a passage one may wish to consider.

With so much information, education, knowledge, and supposed wisdom, why do humans still know so little?

Does God have the answers to the important questions?

July 29

Romans 5:1, 2

"Peace, Grace, & Hope"

1 Wherefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Blessing: Justified by faith

Blessing: Peace with God through Jesus

Blessing: Access to grace by faith because of Jesus

Blessing: Ability to stand and rejoice in hope



Ecclesiasticus 2:7

"Wait For It"

Ye that fear the Lord, wait for his mercy, and go not aside, lest ye fall.

Expect mercy from the Lord. Wait for it. Hold on. Those of you who fear the Lord, just wait for his mercy. Do not give up. Do not go elsewhere from faith in Him. Don't place

yourself in danger of falling due to impatience. Wait for the Lord's mercy. Wait for it.

July 31

Ecclesiasticus 4:27

"Under a Fool"

Make not thyself an underling to a foolish man, neither accept the person of the mighty.

This is logical, reasonable, and helpful advice.

Where there is a choice, avoid voluntarily being subject to or "under" a foolish person. Whether it's a boss, a minister, an elected official, a spouse, or any person who would or could have any degree of power over your life, do not intentionally put a foolish person in such positions "over" yourself. Don't choose a fool to rule—in any capacity. Again, this is where you have a choice in the matter.

Also, don't accept everything from a person just because he or she is in a high position. Don't idolize powerful people. Some people place wealthy or so-called "successful" people on pedestals. Don't ignore any wrongdoing simply because a person is socially or monetarily powerful. Don't trust or accept a person automatically just because he or she is affluent.

August 1

Romans 12:1,2
"Unconformed"

[1] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

What is meant by "sacrifice"?
Anti-self. To subdue self interests and fleshly desires. To resist self-promotion.

By what means does one present one's body "a living sacrifice"? What is the source?
"By the mercies of God". Dependence on God's mercy rather than one's own strengths.

What are the characteristics of a body that is "a living sacrifice"? Fruit of the Spirit vs. Works of the Flesh. Which category does your life more closely resemble?

Born into "this world" and being saturated by its tenets, how does one avoid being conformed to it and

instead become "transformed by the renewing" of one's mind? How does one get and stay clean when he or she has been dumped into a mud pit from birth?

To become unsaturated from this world, one must intentionally saturate oneself in God—through Scripture and through God's holy Spirit. One must purposefully separate oneself from the lusts of this world. Emotionally and spiritually detached from this world's ideologies, pleasures, pursuits, one submits to Holy God's environment. Only then can the mind begin to be retrained and transformed.

Also, it's only when God purifies the mind can one "prove" or exemplify what is "that good", "acceptable", and "perfect will of God". When one is surrounded by and infested with filth, one cannot discern well enough to determine what is clean. You can't show what you don't know. So, when God transforms the mind, the change will be made known—shown.

Choosing to present one's body as a living sacrifice is an act of faith. It is a chance to

honor God by taking steps, from one's best understanding, to mentally get out of "this world" in a biblical and holy way.

August 2

Matthew 12:46-50

"Biological Family vs. God's-Will Family"

46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. 47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. 48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

It's been said that you don't choose your family. That's in reference to one's biological family. There is another family, however, and they are the called and chosen of God. That family consists only of those who do the will of the heavenly Father.

It's a matter of a blood-of-Jesus connection vs. any biological or marital tie. *Family* is not

family where the “family” member is not a member of the family of God.

August 3

Matthew 15:10-20

“Rite & Reveal”

10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. 12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? 13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. 14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. 15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. 16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? 17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which

defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

First, let's address what Jesus was NOT saying:

1) He was not condoning eating with dirty hands.
2) He was not saying that because whatever is eaten is dispelled, it's acceptable to eat anything and everything.
3) He was not saying everything people say is true and straight from their hearts.

Obviously, using dirty hands to eat with could be unsanitary with regard to physical health. Also, eating certain things could be poisonous. Further, people SAY all sorts of things that are not true, so Jesus was not saying any of those things.

What he said, first to the multitudes and then later clarifying to his disciples, was when it came to the ritual, or rite, they had of ceremonially washing utensils, that didn't matter. What mattered was the condition of hearts. Evil thoughts, murders, committing adultery and fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies come from hearts and they "defile a man".

Mid-topic, Jesus also dealt with another issue.

It was about offending religious leaders. He dealt with that because his disciples told him he had offended the Pharisees.

The Jesus Principle on Offending Religious Leaders:

If God didn't plant it (whatever it is), it will be uprooted (dug up, unplanted). Leave them alone. If the blind lead the blind, both (the leaders and their followers) will fall into **the ditch** *(likely in reference to doctrinal error and/or eternal damnation)*. Whatever that ditch is, it doesn't sound like a great place in which to lead or to follow anyone.

Bottom line, it's our hearts, not our **rites** that **reveal** who we are.



August 4

Romans 11:33

"What About God?"

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

There is just so, so much about God. There's just loads and loads about the wisdom and knowledge of God! Many of the questions about God can't even be searched. Questions

about God's ways are beyond answers—they're "past finding out".

The Matthew's Bible Version of 1537 says:

O the deepness of the **abundant** wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!

I personally prefer this version's use of "abundant" rather than "riches" because the latter word, somehow, makes me think of greed and selfishness when I first hear it. I realize the words are similar, but abundant, here, seems to make me focus on God's wisdom and knowledge, as opposed to the word "riches". Again, it's a personal preference and either version could lead the reader to the ultimate message.

That message may appear to be a general statement or perhaps a nice praise, but looking closer, it's rather the answer to so many theological questions.

There are simply many things about God that, not only can we never know, but there's no place to even look for answers to why God does what God does. The Coverdale of 1535 says: ...How **incomprehensible** are his judgments, and his ways unsearchable!

August 5

Haggai 2:5-7

"Heavens, Earth, Sea, Land, & Nations Shaken"

5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. 6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

Just For Thought:
If this is a prophecy, has it been fulfilled? Who is speaking? To whom is being spoken? What is this shaking of all nations? What is "the desire of all nations" that did or is due to come? What house was or will be filled with glory?

What was the specific instruction on what not to do? What is meant by "a little while"?

August 6

Psalm 9:8

"Righteous & Upright Judgment"

And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

With so much corruption in governments and legal systems and all systems and areas of life, is there any hope for a time of good, correct, and righteous judgment? This could only be so with God as judge for wherever humans have power, there is envy, inequity based on family name and ties with social organizations, colors of skin, gender, and other factors. There is bribery and fear to do what is right. There is covert and overt meanness and even cruelty just for sport. The only way there will ever be uprightness and righteousness in judgment is where God rules.



August 7

Ecclesiasticus 14:20

"Good Meditation"

Blessed is the man that doth meditate good things in wisdom, and that reasoneth of holy things by his understanding.

These days, it seems as if many are teaching and being taught to so-called *meditate* on almost anything except the heavenly Father and especially to meditate on nothingness. Eastern meditation is drowning everyone

through western media.

However, this passage encourages meditation and REASONING on “good things” in wisdom and understanding. That means purposeful, deep thoughts on godliness. It’s full awareness of on what one meditates in wisdom and understanding. There is a clear difference between eastern-styled meditation which encourages empty-mindedness vs. the biblical meditation of awareness and mindful contemplation on the Creator.

Be aware. Regardless to how it may be labeled, (and media does keep changing the labels to trick unsuspecting people) not every kind of meditation is good meditation.

August 8

Matthew 22:1-14

“Called, Chosen”

1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my

dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. 7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

2 Questions:

(1) What was meant by the improper garment? A: Was the issue that the man was "not dressed in righteousness", as some say, or was the problem "SELF", which was rejected by God?

The man's clothing, whether casual or disrespectful attire, is not the point. It was the MESSAGE that was important rather than the actual clothing.

Just as Jesus was trying to relay in Luke's account of this parable (Luke 14:16-34), one's SELF or personal issues should not be a factor when it comes to accepting his invitation (excuses were given for not attending).

In John 10, some tried to enter the sheepfold, "some other way". Similarly, this man came in with an unacceptable attitude—an unapproved mindset or agenda.

This parable is just that—an illustration for the purpose of revealing or concealing. The question is, will the parable be properly understood or will doubts, wrong attitudes, and personal issues of the listener hinder spiritual growth and understanding?

Here, you have to step back and try NOT to match word for word or picture for picture. Actually, that happens a lot in Scripture. One

frequently has to get an overall message, rather than a word-for-word interpretation, especially when it comes to parables.

The thing to understand about the man being rejected is that God has issue with those who only APPEAR TO come but who do so in a way that is selfish or uncommitted. They are "there" but not there. They are with God, but not really with God. Luke's parallel verse talks about self interests, misplaced priorities, and of not counting the cost of following Christ—of not being "all in", so to speak. That's the message.

(2) If "few" are chosen, why was it that the majority who came to the wedding were accepted but only 1 was rejected?

A: Many were "called" from the start. More were called by messengers who were sent out with invitations but had bad results. Still more were called when workers went out asking everyone to come. From ALL who had been invited ("many" had been "called"), only a "few" of that total number actually came and were "chosen".

John 16:20

"Sorrow, Then Joy"

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

God's ways are not as those of humans. Why have to weep and lament at all? Will the joy ever compensate for the sorrow?

No matter what one may feel about God's ways, we won't always understand or agree with them, and we can't change them. Even so, just as the prophesied sorrow, there is the promised joy.

August 10

Matthew 17:14-21

"Faith, Prayer, & Fasting"

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, 15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. 16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. 17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. 18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him:

and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. 21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

For Thought:
Was this passage intended to be a formula for guaranteed healing, casting out devils, and the mountain-moving ability to get anything one wants? In what way did Jesus' own disciples lack mustard seed-like faith? How were they operating in "unbelief"? Did they also fail in the kind of prayer and fasting it might take for that degree of success?

August 11



Deuteronomy 4:39
"Is God Really in Power on Earth?"

Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in

heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.

Read it. Think about it. Know it. When doubts arise concerning God, remember it and hold to it.

The LORD is God in heaven above. The LORD is God on the earth, which is beneath heaven. There is no one else who is both God in heaven and God on earth. Though sometimes it may not appear to be true, Scripture says it is so. As such, this message should be an established fact within the hearts of Believers.



August 12

Song of the Three Children 1:1-7

"Humility While in the Fire"

[1] Then Azarias stood up and prayed on this manner, and opening his mouth in the midst of the fire, said, [2] Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers: thy name is worthy to be praised, and glorified for evermore. [3] For thou art righteous in all the things that thou haft done to us: yea, true are all thy works: thy ways are right, and all thy judgments truth. [4] In all the things that thou hast brought upon us, and upon the holy city of our

fathers, even Jerusalem, thou hast executed true judgment: for according to truth and judgment, didst thou bring all these things upon us, because of our sins. [5] For we have sinned and committed iniquity, departing from thee. [6] In all things have we trespassed, and not obeyed thy commandments, nor kept them, neither done as thou hast commanded us, that it might go well with us. [7] Wherefore all that thou hast brought upon us, and everything that thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment.

Though having done nothing personally, he accepted responsibility for the wicked ways of his people.

He accepted his possible resulting fate with a dignified yet honest humility.

He acknowledged God's righteous judgment.

He exhibited this true meekness, not in hopes of escaping the fire, nor after having escaped it, but rather IN THE MIDST of the FIRE.

He blessed, praised, and glorified God even while going through literal fire.

We, true Believers, have a clear example of how to think, speak, and act when pushed into the various fiery furnaces of life.

August 13

John 8:42-47

"Can't Hear, Don't Believe, Don't Love, & God Is Not Their Father"

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.
43 Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.
45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

That's the way it is concerning truth. Some people, sometimes even so-called religious ones, vehemently reject truth. There's a spirit

within them, Jesus called it, “the devil”, that has them stuck on sin—no matter how compelling the truth proves to be. They can’t hear the words of truth and they don’t believe truth. They have no love for truth because God is not their Father.

August 14

1 John 5:7

“3 R 1”

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

It’s plain, but so few will accept this. Some even claim this was not in the original writings. Nonetheless, there is a confirmation in heaven (a REAL place) of the authority and oneness of God.

August 15

Matthew 7:6

“Goodness to K9 & Swine?”

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

This is similar to saying, “Don’t waste your

time”, or “Don’t waste your breath” with certain people. Not only will they disregard your efforts, but they’ll turn on you.

Where you tried to help them, they will try to hurt you. They’ll falsely accuse you of trying to harm them or of judging them. They’ll try to start an argument from what you’ve said. They’ll deliberately do the opposite of your advice or guidance purely out of rebellion. They’ll do all kinds of anti-godliness in repayment of your good will.

Dogs and swine represent flagrant wickedness of spirit. Holiness is altogether despised by such.



August 16

Acts 14:8-10

“Faith Perceived”

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

Beyond the healing itself, this passage contains other

note-worthy points and also spark questions:

. An afflicted and unused body part (even from birth) was repairable

. A Holy Spirit-filled follower of Christ perceived, or discerned, faith in another person—even a stranger.

. As some attempt to imitate, was a “loud voice” necessary, or did Paul do that merely for lack of voice amplification in a crowd?

. What might the newly healed man have felt which caused him to leap? Was there some tingling or fiery sensation or, perhaps, he experienced some physical force?

. That was done then, but can it be done today? Are there those who don’t just talk, but who actually perceive faith in others and bring about godly healings?

August 17

Luke 8:18

“Take Heed How You Hear”

VIDEO: https://archive.org/details/take-heed-how-you-hear-luk-8



Jesus presented a verbal illustration of 4 types of reception—4 ways in which what is heard is received or understood. He used the concept of farming whereby seeds fell: (1) by the way side, (2) upon a rock, (3) among thorns, and (4) on good ground.

Luke 8:4-18

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: 5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience. 16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. 17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Luke 8:18 warns to, “Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”

TAKE HEED!

Pay Attention To. Care About. Spend Time On. Watch.
Seriously Think About. Be Responsible For…
HOW YOU HEAR.

Invest the time and energy that is required to carefully evaluate the way in which you receive Scripture.
TEST the SOWER. TEST the SEED.
TEST the SOIL.

Is the teacher (SOWER) worldly and greedy requiring money or attempting to shame those who do not follow by fattening his pockets. Does he, himself, refuse to practice what is in Scripture or, as it should be, is he or she an ever-maturing Believer who bears fruit according to Scripture?

Is the information (SEED) a popular doctrine which twists Scripture into some feel-good, occult-rooted dynamic deception? Is it a "you're a king", "you're a queen", "you're a god" teaching or is it, instead, sound doctrine directly from the Bible which reveres God and teaches worship of him only?

Are you (SOIL) half-listening with other things on your mind? Are you more interested in being accepted than obeying God? Have pains or pleasures, preset beliefs or false doctrines dulled your hearing or hardened your heart against biblical correction or, rather, are you receptive with truth-oriented ears?

Do you *notice* HOW YOU HEAR? Have you read the Bible for yourself to determine if what you're hearing is actually written there and if it is being interpreted in context and in line with other scriptures? Have you compared different "versions" for yourself to see how differences may affect your understanding?

Luke 8:15
But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

TAKE HEED. Try the spirits! (1 John 4:1). **When the word of God seed has been planted into repentant and receptive hearts, there is godly productivity—always. Guaranteed. It can't be hidden. If it's present, it will be seen. (Luke 8:16, 17). If growth is not seen, it's because it is not present. That's Scripture. Spiritual maturity. Growth.**

Question:

What is Proof of "Good Ground"?

Answer: *(re-read Luke 8:15)*
Having heard "the word" (scriptural teaching), you will "keep it" (remember it, treasure it, live by it) and you will "bring forth fruit" (be changed by it and be a part of godly change in others) with patience (progressively over time).



The word itself will become living within you and you will live it. The fruit becomes visible to others. It is undeniable growth in truth.

HOW **YOU HEAR is crucial to spiritual growth so TAKE HEED.**

Ecclesiasticus 3:29

The heart of the prudent will understand a parable, and an attentive ear is the desire of a wise man.

Ecclesiasticus 6:35

Be willing to hear every godly discourse, and let not the parables of understanding escape thee.

August 18

Tobit 13:10

"Praise With Purpose"

Give praise to the Lord, for he is good: and praise the everlasting King, that his tabernacle may be builded in thee again with joy, and let him make joyful there in thee those that are captives, and love in thee for ever those that are miserable.

May God's tabernacle be built within us. May the Lord give us joy in place of our misery and love and freedom from all forms of captivity.

August 19

James 1:27
"What 'KIND' of Religion?"

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Some believe they have religion because they attend church services. Others say they are religious because they were baptized or because of their family connections or because they pay tithes, visit other countries, or for various other reasons. Nonetheless, what is God-honored religion? What 'kind' of religion matters?

Scripture is saying that PURE religion, the religion which is "undefiled" as in not corrupted and not polluted—according to the standards of Father God, has specific criteria.

Those with pure religion will: 1) help those who are downtrodden, ignored, hurting, and helpless and, 2) keep themselves "unspotted from the world". They accept responsibility over their own lives rather than placing it on anyone else to make sure they fight to get, be, and stay in a way that is pleasing to God. They

don't make parents, church leaders, or spouses responsible for their actions or consequences.

Despite all worldly opposition, and there is plenty, those who, *at least* PURSUE pure religion, make it a lifelong goal to practice the 2 great commandments. That is, to love the lord with all heart, soul, mind, and might (keeping oneself unspotted from the world) and to love neighbor as self (visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction).

That's their kind of religion—pure religion.



August 20

Matthew 7:14

"Few Finders"

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

This came to my mind recently, "The Truer, The Fewer". I have never heard that before.

Scripture lets us know that few find the way which leads to life. Why? This same verse answers that. "Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way." Straight and narrow is difficult. That way is not filled with constant ease, pleasantness, and luxuries. Therefore, it

does not even attract most. That's why there are FEW finders. There are a very few who find the way or the gate which leads to real life.

August 21

Psalm 3:5,6

"A Comfort to Sleep Unafraid?"

5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me. 6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.

Many biblical verses are sometimes wrongly used as a promise or guarantee for EVERY Believer at ALL times. This one is no exception.

It can be a comforting verse, but it is not a pledge from God. It is neither God talking nor does it even imply to every Believer who lays down to sleep that he or she will awaken. It makes biblical sense that if one awakens from sleep, it is because God sustained, or kept, him or her. But again, some do not awaken.

This passage also does not secure protection against from harm by people ("I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people"). Though we are told throughout Scripture not to be afraid of people, neither this, nor any other Bible verse, guarantees people cannot ever physically harm

us. One only need look at the suffering of Jesus and others in Scripture as well as others throughout history as proof that godly people are not always shielded from disaster.

This passage, however, may provide a sense of peace for any who might worry or fear so much that they cannot sleep, but again, that is not what it's talking about in context to the rest of the passage.

The issue is a matter of balance in understanding. One has to rightly divide—correctly discern. Here, one person (likely David) was praying or writing poetry to or about God's protection over himself.

It's not good to take one passage, and interpret it as a 100% guaranteed vow from God to you personally. It's commonly done and taught, but to do so is a misapplication of Scripture and it just doesn't work.

Further, neither repeating nor "claiming" these types of verses is a formula for pleasant or desirable outcomes.

So, we can have fearless comfort during sleep. We're in God's care and He's in control. Even so, let's not misuse scriptural passages or turn them into incantations for our own pleasure.

August 22

Ecclesiasticus 8:5-7

"Commonalities"

5 Reproach not a man that turneth from sin, but remember that we are all worthy of punishment. 6 Dishonor not a man in his old age: for even some of us wax old. 7 Rejoice not over thy greatest enemy being dead, but remember that we die all.

This shows similarities in humankind and gives reasons for not picking at each other.

1) Don't criticize a person because they have stopped sinning. I once heard a man mock people who turn from sin when they became older. "Yeah", the man said, "they've suddenly become so holy now that they're too old to drink and party".

Regardless to the age of a person, if he or she grows up mentally and stops doing anything that's harmful to himself or herself, physically or spiritually, it's a good thing! Plus, as this passage warns, we're all "worthy of punishment". None of us can really afford to look down our noses at others.

2) Don't pick on old folks. I used to hear, "you'll get old too...if you live long enough". It's

a golden rule practice that you treat others the way you'd want to be treated. Would you like to be disrespected when you're whatever is considered "old"?

3) Don't waste your energy being glad that even your worst enemy is dead. The fact is that we all die.

Recognize our commonalities more than our differences. It's just kindness and good sense in general.

August 23

Matthew 5:6

"Felt Empty Lately?"

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

What's the "filling" True Believers want, need, and pursue?

The world system teaches and promotes anything and everything other than righteousness. From sports, politics, and gambling to substances and foods, to anything set to keep us busy and craving more, more, more.

People are taught to hunger and thirst...but not for righteousness. We are never urged to

passionately desire what is right and holy.

Pseudo-righteousness, yes, that's pushed, but not genuine righteousness. The world, even mainstream churches, not only will not teach the hunger and thirst for righteousness, it vehemently discourages it. Most religious organizations make outcasts of those who would dare to think for themselves enough to follow **righteousness**. But that's the filling for the empty feeling.



August 24

Psalm 4:8

"Confidence In God ONLY"

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

As a Believer, do you feel at rest only when life's circumstances are favorable? Do you feel as if you can lie down and sleep peacefully because things are, at least somewhat, ordered? Do you have a sense of safety because you have a great home or office security system or because you have friends and family? If so, then your confidence may be in those quite fallible things or people rather than in God alone.

August 25

The Rest of Esther 13:17

"A Prayer for Mercy"

Hear my prayer, and be merciful unto thine inheritance: turn our sorrow into joy, that we may live, O Lord, and praise thy Name: and destroy not the mouths of them that praise thee, O Lord.

It's a godly prayer. They are words any Believer may sincerely communicate to the most High when experiencing anxieties: Hear my prayer. We are Your own people, Your inheritance, and we ask for mercy. Please turn our sorrow into joy. We are asking that You preserve our lives. We want to be able to continue praising Your name. Please, Lord, don't allow those who praise You to be destroyed.

August 26

Matthew 7:20

"Fruit Proofs"

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

It's like saying, "what you see is what you get". But fruits, unlike superficial presentations such as make-up, fancy clothing, and expensive gadgets, are not external fakes. Fruits go

deeper and they reveal what is deeper.

People are known by their fruits. The proof is in the fruits.

August 27

Luke 13:24

"Restricted Entry?"

Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

How would one "strive to enter" at the strait gate? Why would one need to strive (struggle, go all-out, make every effort) since salvation is a matter of faith?

Someone asked Jesus if only few would be saved. Today's verse was part of Jesus' answer. He then continued with a parable:

After the master of the house has gotten up and shut the door, and while you're standing outside of it knocking and requesting the door be opened, the master will say something.

He'll say to you: I don't know who you are. In response, you'll say, but You *do* know us because we have eaten and drank with You and You've taught us. Nevertheless, the master will say, I'm telling you that I do not know you so

get away from me, you iniquity workers.

It appears that Jesus was talking to Jews who apparently felt that WHO they were and WHAT they had done, automatically entitled them to being "in"—on the inside; saved. However, Jesus was conveying a message that would transcend them and their time, and to us and ours—and beyond. It was an important principle. He gave an example of how the "iniquity" of self-delusion could cause permanent loss.

Jesus was saying that just because you're *hanging around me*, so to speak, or are in my presence, or are of a certain lineage, doesn't make you "in". He continued by saying that those from east, west, north, and south— those who were never *physically* close to him, would enter but, though some may have benefit of lineage or location, those who were iniquity workers, would be "thrust out".

So then, a way to understand the 'striving to enter in' is the struggle to overcome the self-deception from any way of thinking one is pre-set or privileged based on surface means. Such ways include being an Israelite or particular shades of skin, or attending religious services, or paying so-called "tithes", belonging to a

certain family or social organization, having long/short hair, wearing long sleeves, speaking in tongues, being a "good person", patriotism, etc).

The point is to not become deceived by self-reliance with regard to salvation. Examine the reasons you believe you are heaven-bound. Dare to do something really serious. **Ask God** to **search your heart** (1 Chron. 8:9; Psalms 44:21; 139:23-24; Jeremiah 17:10; Romans. 8:27). Be honest. Don't stay in a condition in which you will end up seeing, "Restricted Entry" and hearing, "Leave". Don't proudly lie to yourself while living in rebellion.



August 28

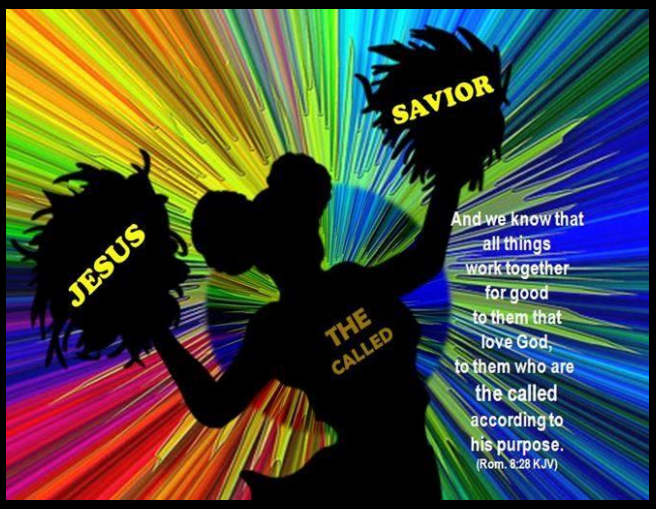
Romans 8:28

"Called? No, THE Called!"

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

True Followers of Messiah are not just "called" (because many are called but few are chosen

Matthew 20:22). They are THE Called.



When reading or reciting Romans 8:28, too many completely skip the article "the" and it's a disservice to the verse. Doing so weakens it's meaning.

"The called" is very important exactly as written because it denotes a title, a position, and a responsibility. As a reborn, sanctified child of God, you are THE CALLED. You are in a particular and peculiar class. True Believers are not of the many, but are of the few. Yes, you have been called and also chosen, but Romans 8:28 specifically says you are "the called" as in elite—separated for a unique purpose.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Romans 1:6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

It's similar to a few members of a military being charged with a special mission; an extraordinary unit designated to do something different from others. So what is one purpose of those who are of The Called? 1 Peter 2;9 says you are to show the praises of the One who has called you into light.

You are the crème de la crème of the cheerleading squad for Jesus. You were chosen to be a part of that honored few to uniquely honor the One.

Further, though it may not always seem that everything is working together for good, as being one of those who love God and are "The Called according to his purpose", all things, in fact, do work together for good.

Be aware, however, that the exclusive praise spoken of, that 'The Called' kind of praise, may not always be a cheery, smiling-faced, bubbly expression. Sometimes the praises of God that these exclusive members show forth are in the form of faithful endurance during extremely challenging situations. 'The Called' praises may occur in the midst of what appears to be losses. The sometimes stern-faced praise is still valid praise as the Believer submits every difficulty to the same One who has brought

him or her out of darkness and into God's marvelous light.

August 29

Zechariah 1:3

"You Turn. I Turn. Says the LORD"

Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.

I love how this passage makes it so clear who is speaking.

3 times it says it is the LORD who is willing to hear and receive those who take the steps toward Him. The LORD is saying, "if you turn to me, I will turn to you".

August 30

Ecclesiasticus 1:23,24

"Patience Produces Profit"

23 A patient man will bear for a time, and afterward joy shall spring up unto him. 24 He will hide his words for a time, and the lips of many shall declare his wisdom.

This passage expresses two benefits of patience: 1) after some time, patience will produce joy and 2) when words are intentionally restrained,

others will think it is because that person possesses wisdom.

That's it. When you exercise patience, you profit.

August 31

Acts 15:18
"He Knows"

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

God has a much bigger plan than we, humans, can possibly comprehend. God knows what's going on and has known since the very beginning.

September 1

Psalms 66:3,5,7
"God's Greatness"

3 Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. 5 Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. 7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

God, how incredible your works are! I can see why your enemies surrender to you. It's

because of your great power.

Hey, everybody! Come see God's fantastic art, crafts, and creations. What he does for people is awesome. His power rules. Non-stop and unending!

By the way, he sees everything, so you mess-ups shouldn't get too full of yourselves. Yeah.



September 2

Romans 1:17

"From Faith To Faith"

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

The concept of the just living by faith is not new nor is it just a New Testament ideology. It was written in the law and the prophets, hence the phrase, "as it is written".

This is, as some might say, "old school" godliness. "From faith to faith" is rudimentary righteousness and was important before anyone was ever called "Christian".



September 3

Ecclesiasticus 18:30-33

"Setting Yourself Up For Sorrow"

30 Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself

from thine appetites. [31] If thou givest thy soul the desires that please her, she will make thee a laughing stock to thine enemies, that malign thee. [32] Take not pleasure in much good cheer, neither be tied to the expense thereof. [33] Be not made a beggar by banqueting upon borrowing, when thou hast nothing in thy purse, for thou shalt lie in wait for thy own life: and be talked on.

Some time ago, I saw a clip about a young woman in her mid 20s who had debt collectors standing at her front door. They were waiting to repossess unpaid home furnishings and other items in her condo. At the same time, guests were visiting her and enjoying her expensive foods and drinks.

The woman had been regularly entertaining others, spending lots of money on lavish cars, clothes, jewels, collectables, music, trips and other things she obviously couldn't afford—including the condo itself.

She was about to become a beggar by banqueting on (indulging) borrowing though she had nothing in her purse. She had become tied to the expenses she created. She was setting the stage to have an embarrassing life.

She would certainly be talked about—even by those she once entertained. Her lusts, desires, appetites, and much good cheer was about to make her a laughing stock to any who would love to see her down. She was setting herself up for sorrow.

This bit of wisdom can be seen as a warning to avoid this kind of scenario which is, unfortunately, quite common in many societies. Far too many insist on living above their means and they end up suffering harsh consequences. This guidance was applicable during the time it was written and in today's times as well. It's sound advice for anyone to keep their "gotta' haves it" behavior (harmful cravings), in check.

September 4

Psalm 9:9

"A Safety"

The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Not only can the LORD give us a refuge, a safe place or respite, but He can BE that very reprieve. He can be our amnesty in times of trouble—and there's plenty trouble for those who seek God.

September 5

2 Timothy 1:7

"Afraid? WHAM! That's Not God! Huh?..."

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

I have had this passage thrown in my face and seen it used as a whip of shame against others. Often it was done by professing Christians who thought it was right to use this verse in such unloving and twisted way.

Nonetheless, these words were never intended to cause emotional injury toward Believers when they experienced sadness or anxiety. It was never meant to say that if you have fears or worries, you are being influenced by evil spirits and are, therefore, bad or are in some way out of God's will.

In context to the rest of the passage (2 Timothy 1:1-10), the verse was said as comfort, encouragement, and instruction. Paul was trying to convey to Timothy that the same "unfeigned faith" in God that was in his grandmother and mother, was also in Timothy. Paul was saying to be unashamed

of the testimony of the Lord. He was teaching to be a willing "partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God…" So, rather than being a scolding for having fears (as it is quite wrongly used by some), the whole passage, when rightly divided, was an uplift and reminder of what was within Timothy and what the whole situation was actually about—regardless to how things appeared.

We can glean (from what Paul was saying to Timothy) that in suffering, sadness, loss, and any emotional pain or disappointment, God's power and love overcomes our fears and grants us sound minds. Such sound minds are aided by "sound words" (verse 13). Sound minds comprehend the truth that God saved us and called us with a "holy calling" which is not about our works, but instead, concerns God's purpose.

All of the seeming misery is, in reality, the manifestation (the viewable evidence) of Christ having connected us to himself through his work of "abolishing death" and bringing "life and immortality" through the gospel.

September 6

Romans 6:5

"Planted Together"

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

This, often ignored verse (except perhaps during Easter sermons), addresses the suffering of True Believers. Being "planted together in the likeness of his death..." speaks of how Christ's TRUE followers are connected to Christ as evidenced by a similarity of his death.

What was Christ's death like? What were some of the circumstances associated with Christ's death? What they were, true Christ-followers will see in our lives.

Jesus was very different in thinking and values from those around himself and was mocked and falsely accused by most of his own people. His claims were not believed by many. He was set up, tested, maligned, ousted and rejected by many— though he did very helpful and right things for people. He was starkly betrayed by someone who seemed to be among the closest to him. The legal system was unjustly used

against him. He endured undeserved physical and emotional agony.

Those conditions permeated his death. Likewise, such will be seen in the life of genuine Believers. It's the very suffering similarities that show a fusing, a bond, of true Believers to Christ. Even so, that's not the end of the verse nor is it the end of the promise because "...we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

We are promised to be similar to Christ's resurrection which was profound, powerful, and permanent. It was overcoming and victorious. As Christ's few, we will also be gloriously raised away from earth and its inherent grief. Away, Scripture promises—away to majesty.



September 7

Genesis 1:26

"Us, Us, and Our"

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Throughout the years, many have questioned, debated, and attempted to explain the meaning of the words, “us”, “us”, and “our” as it is written in this scriptural verse. I have my ideas about it too, but frankly, I can’t say emphatically there’s just one way to understand this.

So, I’m stating the following (based on the English translations I have at present): God *and either other parts of Himself* or *God and other individual entities* is referred to in the “us”, “us” and “our” verse.

I lean most heavily to it being God and other parts of Himself. If God, along with other individual entities, were responsible for the creation of humankind, that would imply God *alone* did not create humans. Of course, that would be a clear contradiction to many biblical passages. It would also set us up to wonder who might be the other entities, where they are, and other concerns with “them”. So, I think it’s safe and reasonable to say the “us”, “us”, and “our” in this passage refers to the unity and complexity of God alone.

Perhaps a major point that is too often overlooked is that humankind was

CREATED—not evolved from tadpoles, monkeys, or anything else. Humans were created by "us", "us", and "our".

September 8

Jonah 1:1-17

"Re-Belly'on"

1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. 3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. 4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. 6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. 7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. 8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we

pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? 9 And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. 10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. 11 Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. 12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. 13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. 14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee. 15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. 16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows. 17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Rebellion against God, brings one into the belly of disaster and even jeopardizes the safety of

others. That's the quick overview of the biblical account of Jonah, but let's dive into deeper waters. Pun intended.

"The word of the LORD" came to Jonah.

By the way, "the word of the LORD" is not any Bible version nor any collection of books. Obviously there was no English Bible back then as the language did not exist at that time. God's Word and the word of the LORD was and is a message or instruction from God.

This particular word of the LORD was for Jonah to do 3 things:
(1) get up
(2) go to the large city of Nineveh
(3) speak strongly against Nineveh

A reason was even given:
That city's wickedness had "come up before" God.

Thinking and Dissecting

Verses 1-2

When a problem comes up before God, does that mean God is somehow made aware of an issue he did not know about previously? How does wickedness get God's attention? Prayer/fasting? Keeping the Law? Angels? A spiritual odor as from sacrifices by humans to

the LORD (a sweet savor)? Is it similar to Able's blood calling God from the ground (Genesis 4:10)?

Verse 3

Apparently Jonah heard and understood the LORD because he complied to one of the three requests. He arose. Yes, he got up and went, but he did not go where God told him to go nor did he do what God told him to do. Instead of heading toward Nineveh, he tried to go to a town called Tarshish. Our account says, Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish "from the presence of the LORD" twice, which indicates that is important. Yet, how is it that a prophet of the LORD thought it possible to not be in God's presence? It looks as if Jonah thought because Tarshish was far from where God wanted him to go and in the opposite direction of Nineveh, he could hide "from the presence of the LORD".

It might be said that Jonah was attempting to run from God as some do even today when charged with a unique mission. As ridiculous as it may seem, many have tried to evade the calling or instruction of God. The "Tarshish" for some is a reckless and destructive lifestyle, harmful substances, sports or other gaming,

gambling or even ritualistic church attendance without any relationship with God.

Verses 4-16

Jonah paid for a boat trip in Joppa to go to Tarshish, but the LORD had other plans for him. God sent a severe wind storm causing the ship workers to be very afraid. They decided what was happening was the result of someone angering a god. They tried logical and "spiritual" approaches to the problem. They eliminated excess weight as well as called on their gods.

At some point, they realized Jonah wasn't with them or doing the same things so they went below the deck to get him. He was asleep. They awoke him calling him "Sleeper" and telling him to call on his God so they might be spared of the storm's effects. They decided to "cast lots" to determine fault. The lot fell on Jonah. That meant he was the culprit.

They grilled Jonah about his personal life and he answered all their questions. They asked him what it would take to appease his God. Jonah told them to toss him overboard. They tried to avoid doing that by rowing harder but that didn't help. Finally, they prayed that the LORD would not hold what they were about to

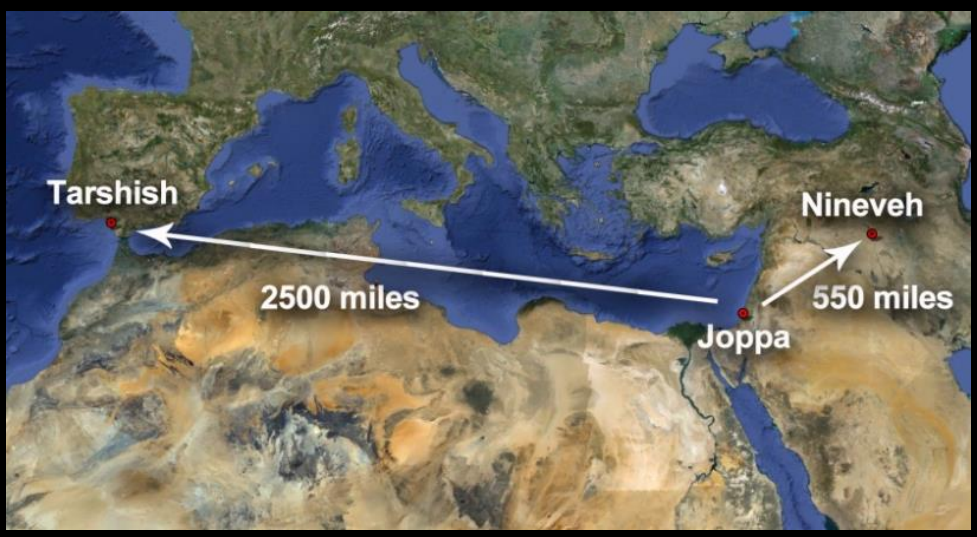
do against them. Then they threw Jonah off the boat into the waters. The storm stopped. The boat workers revered the LORD greatly and later offered sacrifices to him and made personal vows.

Verse 17 and Notes

The LORD had "prepared" a great fish to swallow Jonah. Whatever that preparation consisted of, this fish did not crush and digest this food. Jonah was in this creature's belly for three days and three nights.

There are clear similarities between Jonah's boat experience and one of Jesus' (sleeping in a boat during a storm that only one person could cause to stop). Both were out of sight for 3 days and 3 nights (Jonah's fish belly and Jesus' inner parts of the earth).

That's just the first chapter of the account of the prophet Jonah, his very human ways, and God's very non-human ways of getting things done.



September 9

2 Peter 3:10-14

"How Should We Be Living?"

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Question:
Since everything's going away, how should we live?

Answer:
We should daily live "in all holy conversation and godliness" (11). We should be looking for

and readily awaiting the coming of the day of God. We should be diligent, peaceful, without spot, and blameless (14).

Who says?
It's in there. 2 Peter 3: 10-14... and throughout Scripture. We're not clueless about how we should be living.

September 10

Genesis 1:1-3

"God Created, God Moved, & God Said"

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

God is One of Action.

God creates.
God moves.
God says.
Overall, God DOES.

He wants those who love him to also be of action. Though we cannot, and never will, do the things He has done, we can, and are to be spiritually active.

Throughout Scripture, we are urged to be His own creations who are of action.

We can utilize the lives we are given to CREATE (such as godly art, movies, books, sermons, podcasts, online postings, music, maybe even God-honoring games, and more). As lights to the world, we can MOVE others, to live righteously. We can be godly influencers. Along that same line of thought, we can also SAY what is good and right to encourage ourselves in godliness and to aide others in right living.

Again, we are not God and will never "evolve" into God. We cannot create something from nothing as God did. Any waters we move upon just make us wet or we end up poisoning them with chemicals. We also cannot "speak things into existence" (as some have twisted Scriptures to say). Nonetheless, we may see a correlation between what God has done in creation and what we can do as his creations.

Ultimately, we see from this biblical passage that God was the Creator from the very beginning.

September 11

Ecclesiasticus 51:23

“Come. Closer. Live in the House of My Wisdom”

Ecclesiasticus 51:23		
1611 KJV	**Geneva, 1560**	**Great Bible, 1540**
Draw near unto me **you** unlearned, and dwell in the house of **learning**.	Draw near unto me, **ye** unlearned, and dwell in the house of **learning**.	O come unto me **ye** unlearned, and dwell in the house of **my wisdom**:

How can we get closer to God?
What are specific steps Believers can take to have a deeper bond—a real relationship with Creator?

Connection and Communion

How can unholy humans link to the Holy God?

☑ Scripture ☑ Prayer
☑ Obedience ☑ Self-denial

September 12

John 1:14

“Word 2 Flesh”

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,

(and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

"THE WORD", which was never any Bible, was made flesh. We understand that to be God became flesh through the person of Jesus, the Messiah. His magnificence was witnessed. It was such splendor that could only be of the Father—one born of Him. That glory was filled with grace and truth.



September 13

Ecclesiasticus 27:25-30

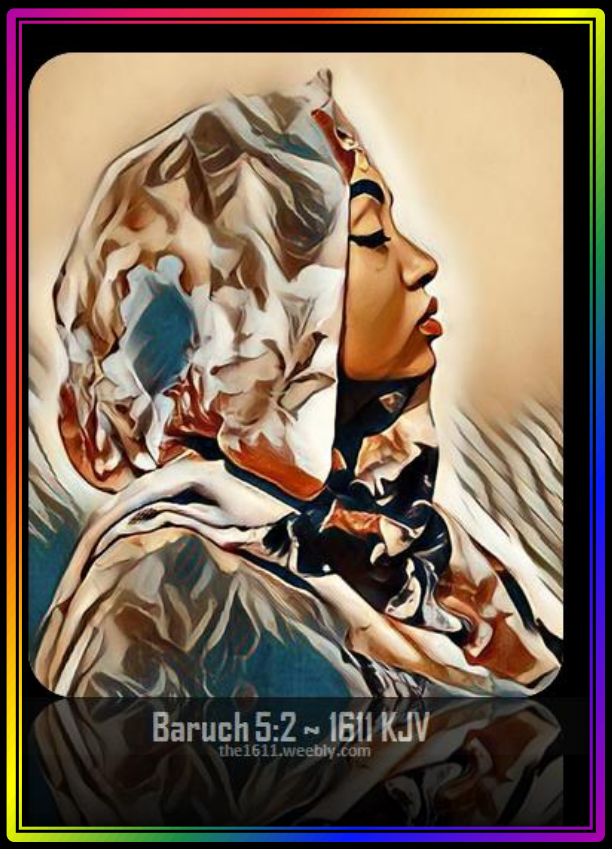
"Rules of Boomerang"

25 Who so casteth a stone on high, casteth it on his own head, and a deceitful stroke shall make wounds. 26 Who so diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that setteth a trap shall be taken therein. 27 He that worketh mischief, it shall fall upon him, and he shall not know whence it cometh. 28 Mockery and reproach are from the proud: but vengeance as a lion shall lie in wait for them. 29 They that rejoice at the fall of the righteous shall be taken in the snare, and anguish shall consume them before they die. 30 Malice and wrath, even these are abominations, and the sinful man shall have them both.

It's just good advice to not set traps for others because that same trap, or one similar, will get you.

September 14

Baruch 5:2
“Double Plus Good”



Cast about thee a double garment of the righteousness which cometh from God, and set a diadem on thine head of the glory of the Everlasting.

Diadem: a jeweled crown or headband worn as a symbol of sovereignty

First, wrap yourself
in two layers
of the righteousness
which comes from God.

Secondly, place and a
jeweled crown of the glory of
the Everlasting
on your head.

That’s double plus good.

September 15

Matthew 7:15-20

“Spot Em’! Fakers!”

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

This says: Watch out for fake forecasters who approach you as if they are friendly and sincere but who are actually ready to devour you. You’ll be able to tell who’s who by what they produce.

As surely as is the fact that people don’t collect good stuff that has bad stuff on it, what’s really good will produce good and what’s bad will produce something bad. It’s never the reverse—good won’t yield bad and bad won’t yield good.

Nevertheless, the bad will be punished by being cut down and burned. So, you will know who's who by their output.

September 16

John 1:1

"THE WORD Existed Before Any Bible"

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

As many times as I have read and heard this verse, I was still calling Bibles, any version, "the word of God" and, "the Word" and, "God's Word". Why? I was doing it because that's what was coming from pulpits. Like so many, I was reading the verse correctly but interpreting it incorrectly just as I had been taught to do. Once corrected, however, I read what was there and understand it as it is written.

In the beginning was THE WORD. Since there were no Bibles "in the beginning", the Word, couldn't be and can't be any Bible or any book or collection of books.

THE WORD was with God. Again, no printing press, no paper, no ink, no English language, no language at all existed. So, no. The Word couldn't be any Bible.

THE WORD was God. Obviously, Bibles aren't God. If any Bible is anyone's God, that's idolatry. God is worshipped. Human-made things should never be worshipped.

One may refuse to acknowledge the fact that different Bible versions are different in terms of actual words and their meanings. One may fail to compare versions for oneself. Nevertheless, from this scriptural verse, and others, surely anyone who genuinely pursues truth can see that Bibles did not exist IN THE BEGINNING and, therefore, can NOT be THE WORD.

Further, what is called "THE Bible" contains many writings of many different people. Though inspired by God, even the writers themselves do not claim to be God. Where we are to understand words as coming from God, Scripture always plainly states it with phrases such as, "thus saith the LORD".

Why is it important to know that no Bible is God's Word? Understanding this is necessary because when we take every word in Scripture to be God speaking, we can easily be mislead in our interpretation and understanding. Scriptures can be twisted to manipulate and control our minds and behavior and all,

supposedly, with God's authority and approval when we don't discern who is talking and in what context. Words which were personal meditations or letters to other individuals or congregations, for example, could be wrongly interpreted as definitive promises or guarantees directly from God to us. Then, when expectations do not come to fruition, the faith of many is destroyed.

God was in the beginning. We need to know and fully comprehend that. Nothing else was in the beginning. It's a crucial and foundational truth.



September 17

Ecclesiasticus 17:29

"A Holiness Blessing"

How great is the loving kindness of the Lord our God, and his compassion unto such as turn unto him in holiness?

Question: People who seek the Almighty would surely want the blessings of God's loving-kindness and compassion, but how does one "turn to him in holiness"?

Answer: Turn. Rotate away from things which are the opposite of holiness. Take steps toward intentionally rejecting known

ungodliness. Approach God with a mindset of sincerity and with a desire to submit to God's holy will to experience a holiness blessing.

September 18

Isaiah 53:3-6

"Man of Sorrows"

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

This speaks of Messiah who is the Lord Jesus. Despite the glowing images people use to represent him, it is not the way Scripture depicts the Christ.

He was despised and rejected. He carried the sorrows of all humankind and was fully

acquainted with grief. Whatever his physical appearance or even his "aura" was like, it caused people to avoid so much as looking at him. Something about him was so unsightly that people thought of him as being beaten down and made miserable by God.

Though quite commonly misused, the words, "with his stripes we are healed" does not evoke physical healing. It has nothing to do with making anyone healthy or well. It only has to do with the spiritual healing from the sickness of sin.

So, what has Jesus done for humankind?:

† carried our griefs and took on our sorrows
† allowed himself to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities
† suffered punishment so we would not have to be eternally tormented—so we could have "peace"
† endured physical beatings of "stripes" for our spiritual healing
† handled the iniquity of us all

September 19

Ecclesiasticus 12:8

"Time Will Tell Who's Who"

A friend cannot be known in prosperity, and an enemy cannot be hidden in adversity.

Have you ever heard of a celebrity who had a great deal of money and lots of "friends" at the same time? His or her crew would seem to be so tightly-knit and so close to the celebrity that they were almost inseparable. But what usually happened when the icon's money was gone? More times than not, the friends were gone when the money was gone.

Sometimes members of the former entourage not only showed how unfriendly they had become since the financial loss, but they proved to be enemies. They rejected their past benefactor. Some even testified in court against him or her.

This practical wisdom does not only apply to the wealthy. No one really knows who is a real friend when things are going well. A friend cannot be known in prosperity. Likewise, that old kick-em'-when-they're-down mentality will rear its head when times are hard. When things get rough, undercover enemies will peel away

their masks and reveal who they really are—who is who.

Jesus, the Christ, had 12 inner-circle disciples. They were extremely connected to him as they traveled from place to place and enjoyed the advantages of watching miracles first-hand and being considered special because of their closeness to Christ. However, when mal-treatment became severe and adversity was heightened, even the most devoted fled.

Jesus is not a fair-weather friend. He showed himself to be a friend to the whole world when he gave himself freely for the sins of humankind. His friendship, his LOVE, was not hidden in even the most harsh of conditions. He is the true Who's Who.



September 20

Matthew 5:10-12

"Blessed and Highly Persecuted"

10 **Blessed** are they which are persecuted for
righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of
heaven. 11 **Blessed** are ye, when men shall
revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all
manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is
your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they
the prophets which were before you.

For more:
https://the1611.weebly.com/blessed--highly.html

September 21

Ecclesiasticus 51:7

"No Help From Man"

They compassed me on every side, and there was no man to help me: I looked for the succor of men, but there was none:

Enemies completely surrounded me. I looked for the aide, support, and comfort of people. That effort was totally useless. There was no help. No one would, or could, help me.

That's timeless. It's a common theme for any who truly pursue godliness. I believe it was Leonard Ravenhill who said, "the saint must walk alone." Even a Believer's own "Christian" or biological *family* can sometimes bring only frustration and disappointment. They can actually be more harmful than helpful.

Job, of Scripture, also discovered that reality—there's no help from man.

September 22

Philippians 2:9-11

"A Really Special Name"

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

God has ranked Jesus very highly. He has given Jesus a name that is higher than any other. It was the intention of God that at that very *name* (that authority), every knee SHOULD bow. Everything in heaven, everything on earth, and everything under the earth should bow to Jesus. It was also God's will that every tongue SHOULD confess that Jesus was the Christ, Messiah, and Lord. This would be to Father God's honor—His glory.

Note that Scripture does not say every knee SHALL (will) bow or that every tongue will acknowledge Jesus (Wonderful) as Messiah. I have heard it preached and sung that way, ♬"Every knee shall bow. Every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord..." Turning "should" into

“shall” is a re-wording of Scripture which grossly changes its meaning.

It doesn’t necessarily mean that every creature will or will not eventually recognize Jesus as Lord. Scripture simply does not say that here. This passage speaks only of God’s goal. Just as it’s not God’s will that anyone should be lost, albeit some will be lost.

The focus of this portion of a letter to the Philippians is that the name of Jesus (Yeshua) is super special and reaches heaven, earth, and below earth. It’s a name “above every name”.

If we would grasp the spiritual concept of “name”, we could go even deeper than a proper name (which is written and said differently depending on the language, dialect, or culture). We could delve into the reality of “name” as being a representation of character, spirit, and/or authority.



September 23

Nahum 1:7
“Gracious LORD Knows His Trusters”

The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

The LORD is good, kind, friendly, and merciful. He is a "strong hold"—a powerful keeper, during times of trouble and he knows those who trust Him. YHVH is a tight bond. Knowing their identity, Creator helps those who trust Him.

He is benevolent and his generosity of safely keeping and protecting extends to all who trust in Him.

Matthew's Bible


Full gracious is the Lorde/and a stronge
holde in the tyme of trouble/he knoweth the
that put their trust in him: when the floude

Full gracious is the LORD and a strong hold in the time of trouble and he knoweth them that put their trust in him:

Roget's 21st Century Thesaurus

good [*adj6*] *kind, giving* altruistic, approving, beneficent, benevolent, charitable, considerate, friendly, gracious, humane, humanitarian, kindhearted, merciful, obliging, philanthropic, tolerant, well-disposed; CONCEPTS *404,542*

September 24

2 Esdras 2:20

"Do Right"



Do right to the widow, judge for the fatherless, give to the poor, defend the orphan, clothe the naked.

Widows, the fatherless, the poor, those who are orphaned, the naked, the overall ignored, displaced, and downtrodden need help. What more is there to say? Helping those in need is just RIGHT! Do what's right. Do the right things. Do right. Be a "do right" person.

September 25

Philippians 1:6

"Worthwhile Confidence"

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Of all the things people have confidence in, this is one that is worthwhile. Believers can be secure in the knowledge that God, who has started "a good work" in us, will finish it. That

good work is not jobs, activities, particular purposes, or callings, but the work of changing us from whatever we are to whatever He wants us to be.

It's an ongoing process that will be completed on "the day of Jesus Christ". Though that good work is about Christ and not self, we can be sure it will happen. We can be confident that Christ will do all that needs to be done within us for God's glory.



September 26

Ephesians 6:10-16

"The REALLY REAL War & How to Fight"

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of

peace; [16] Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. [17] And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

This scriptural passage has to be heard, accepted, understood, experienced, and the whole process repeated again and again for its depth of meaning to be worked into a Believer. Every single part of this is crucial and yet, sometimes, difficult to truly apply in day-to-day life.

I could break down every verse in explanation, but I don't feel mere words would be effective here. Actually facing "the wiles of the devil", understanding that you're not wrestling against flesh and blood, but rather the fight is against principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places, and having to utilize "the whole armour of God" as a true Believer is the only way to truly know. It's the only way to comprehend that there really is a spiritual battle which rages against humankind, and especially against those who stand with Creator.

Yes, there really is a real war. Will you fight?

September 27

John 3:16

"Only Born Son's Purpose"

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It's not just a memory verse. It's a need-to-know verse. The very purpose of Jesus, God's "begotten Son", was to save souls. Jesus is God's love to "whosoever believeth" in him. Through Jesus, there is "everlasting life" rather than the requirement for souls to "perish".

Yeshua (Jesus) was the only one who could become the sacrifice for the sins of all humankind, according to Scripture.

September 28

Proverbs 3:5-8

"Instruction & Promise"

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. 8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

It may seem simple. Maybe for some it is. For many of us, however, trusting in the LORD with **ALL** of our hearts rather than depending on our own understanding, does not come naturally or easily. It is, nonetheless, an instruction, along with acknowledging God in all of our actions, not being wise in our own minds (eyes), revering the Lord, and getting away from evil.

Those are instructions with an attached promise of blessing. Application of that, way of thinking—practicing that behavior, carries the benefit of some degree of health and well-being.

The navel and marrow of bones has even deeper implications, but, suffice it to say, following this guideline is just a very good thing. It's healthy.

So here, in this frequently quoted passage (well at least the first verse of it is often quoted), we have instruction with its attached promise.



September 29

John 9

"Will You Receive Sight, or Remain Blind?"

Background:

Jesus saw a man who was born blind. Jesus' disciples asked whose sin, the man or his parents, caused the blindness. Jesus answered that neither he nor his parents were at fault but rather the blindness had a spiritual purpose. It was so God would be made known to others within the man's life.

Jesus made a dirt-saliva mixture, anointed the blind man's eyes, and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man did so and returned with vision. People were confused and speculated about the man's identity and what happened to him. When they asked him, he told them exactly what occurred, saying he didn't know where the person was who gave him the instructions. The people took the newly-seeing man to the Pharisees where he was questioned more. There was more uncertainty. This time, the main issue was that there was a healing on the Sabbath Day.

There was division and debate over whether the man was a vicious sinner for being healed on the Sabbath or the product of a miracle. They even wanted to deny the validity of the former blindness and questioned the man's parents. Afraid of being put out of the synagogue (for confessing Jesus as Christ), they only confirmed their son's identity and condition of blindness from birth. They referred the question of healing back to their son.

The Pharisees questioned the newly-sighted man again and tried to get him to deny Christ. The man

responded that he didn't know anything about Jesus. He only knew that he had been blind and that now he could see. The questions and accusations intensified into interrogation and the man became annoyed. At last, he sarcastically asked them if they wanted to know so they could become Jesus' disciples.

They accused him of being Christ's disciple and said they accepted Moses' authority, but not Jesus'. The man replied: Well, that's amazing. You don't know Jesus but he opened my eyes. We know God doesn't hear sinners but only hears those who worship him. No one has ever heard of someone healing a person who was BORN blind. So, if this man were not of God, he couldn't do anything.

Greatly offended, the Pharisees insulted him and threw him out of their synagogue.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. 39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. 40 And some of the Pharisees which

were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? [41] Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Jesus was saying: This is the judgment I'm here to execute. It's to expose spiritual blindness and to give spiritual sight.

To the Pharisees (and like-minded people of any time-period), Jesus said/says:

If you would stop your sin of **pride** and just acknowledge your need for true spiritual sight, you would be alright. But since you insist you're 20/20—you maintain you're fine, stay blind!

September 30

Isaiah 7:14

"A Sign"

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

For a human female to produce a child, sexual relations must take place, at least that's the normal and natural process. The fact that a virgin, a person who has never engaged in

sexual activity, gave birth was unusual enough to be a clear sign of something! From that point, there are two views: it was all untrue since virgins can't give birth or it was a legitimate prophecy which was later fulfilled.

It's up to each person to search and decide what he or she believes. Is what is called "the virgin birth" merely a fictitious and even ridiculous tale? Is it, instead, a sign to humans that the child, and later man, was as unique as the circumstances surrounding his conception—that he was, in fact, the prophesied Son of the Living God?

According to Scripture, the acceptance or rejection of that belief will affect one's eternity. So, was "the virgin birth" a prophecy fulfilled? Was it a sign or just a story to mess with people's minds?



October 1

Baruch 3:14

"Wisdom, Strength, Understanding, Longevity, Life, Inner Joy, and Peace: Find It"

Learn where is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding; that thou mayest know also where is length of days, and life, where is the light of the eyes,

and peace.

One thing leads to another. This passage instructs to "Learn where" wisdom, strength and understanding may be found. Where are they?

Finding wisdom, strength, and understanding may lead to length of days (longevity), real life (not just existence), the light of the eyes (general health and well-being), and peace (mental and/or physical rest).

The benefit of, or the reason for, seeking consistent wisdom and understanding is improved living or, as some say, "quality of life"—primarily of the spiritual kind.

All of it has to be sought to be found.



October 2

Psalm 100:1-5

"Uplifting Recitation & More"

[1] Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. [2] Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. [3] Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. [4] Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and

bless his name. [5] For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

This passage is commonly recited in church congregations.

It is uplifting and motivational. It is also a very clear reminder of who we are and who we are not. More importantly it is about who God is to His people.

October 3

2 Corinthians 12:5-10

"Good Weakness"

[5] Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. [6] For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. [7] And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. [8] For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. [9] And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] Therefore I take pleasure in

infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul writes:
It's not that I'm thrilled about myself, it's that I'm glad about my "infirmities". I know it sounds crazy, but it's true. I'm trying to hold back some of what I'm feeling so you won't think I'm super-spiritual or something I'm not.

So I wouldn't get too high, (because of such great revelation—so much knowledge and such deeply spiritual knowledge), I was also given "a thorn in the flesh" which is a messenger of Satan for the purpose of hitting me.

Three times, I asked the Lord to cause this particular issue (unspecified) to stop, but he told me this: My his goodness is good enough for you. My strength is made known when you're weak.

So, I'll appreciate frailties and imperfections, fragilities, personal or physical weaknesses within myself. I'll prefer such conditions so that the power of Christ may remain on me. With this understanding, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake"

because it's when I'm weak that I'm actually strong.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

"Pleasure in infirmities..."?! Had Paul slipped into mental darkness or, at the other extreme, had he soared to godly spiritual enlightenment? Is there really a "good weakness"?



October 4

Ecclesiasticus 43:30-32 (1611 KJV)

"You Can Never Go Far Enough"

30 When you glorify the Lord exalt him as much as you can: for even yet will he far exceed, and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary: for you can never go far enough. 31 Who hath seen him, that he might tell us? and who can magnify him as he is? 32 There are yet hid greater things than these be, for we have seen but a few of his works:

When you praise the Lord, even when you do it with all your energy, strength, excitement, and passion, and not even get tired, it still is not enough to match who He is—His greatness.

No one has seen him so who can tell us exactly how magnificent He is? No human is capable

of praising and exalting the LORD to the degree that is deserved. We have only seen a few of his works and there are greater things than these!

You can never go far enough in praising the Great God and Creator of all things.

October 5

1 Thessalonians 5:23

"The Peace of God"

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a prayer. It is a personal desire.

It has meditation-worthy elements:

"God of peace"
"sanctify you wholly"
"whole spirit"
"soul"
"body"
"preserved"
"blameless"
"the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"

October 6

1 John 5:14,15

"We Know God Hears"

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Yes, God hears our desires. Yes, God grants our desires. Also, yes, such desires must be "according to his will".

Any biblical passage used to say every single thing a person, even a sincere Believer, prays for is done, is a gross twisting of Scripture. Many other Bible verses prove that. Day-to-day living proves that as well.

We know God hears. We know God fulfills... according to God's will.

October 7

Hosea 5:1

"A Trap"

Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.

“Priests”, “house of Israel”, and “house of the king” denotes leaders. This message is to the leaders of that time and culture and can benefit this time and culture as well. It’s saying the leadership, representatives, and authority figures, have been a bad influence on others. By their rules and actions, they have become a “net” and a “snare”—a trap that captures and dooms other people.

Governments, for example, can be a trap to its citizens. They have power to enact laws that stop people from doing what is right and cause them to do what breaks God’s laws. One day a thing is illegal then the next day it’s legal and vice versa. What’s eaten depends on what’s available. Leaders have control over what’s available.

Preachers, teachers, parents, spouses, bosses, big sisters or brothers, so-called celebrities—all, as having *some* degree of leadership, can be poor and harmful guides to others.

Anyone who is in power of others, in any capacity, and that includes powers of influence and persuasion, can be a trap.

Don’t set a trap. Don’t be a trap.

October 8

James 4:3

"Ask, But No Receipt"

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Why are some prayer requests unanswered?

Scripture says some prayers are wasted because they are requests for things to satisfy lusts. When petitions are made "that ye may consume it upon your lusts"—for self-satisfaction, you may continue to ask, but there will be no receipt of such requests.

October 9

Ecclesiasticus 34:5-7

"Deceptive Dreams & Divination"

5 Divinations, and soothsayings, and dreams are vain: and the heart fancieth as a woman's heart in travail. 6 If they be not sent from the most high in thy visitation, set not thy heart upon them. 7 For dreams have deceived many, and they have failed that put their trust in them.

Some people practice sorcery to predict futures. Even dreams may seem to be a guide in certain situations. And there are some who

really crave such predictions (like horoscopes) even as a woman is very anxious when she is in labor.

Nonetheless, we are warned about failure which can come from such deception. We are told not to trust in any forecasting if it is not sent from the most High. Beware of deceptive dreams and divination.



October 10

Luke 15:11-32
"The Prodigal Son"

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have

sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am
no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as
one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came
to his father. But when he was yet a great way off,
his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran,
and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son
said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven,
and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called
thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring
forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring
on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring
hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be
merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive
again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to
be merry. 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and
as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard
music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the
servants, and asked what these things meant. 27 And
he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy
father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath
received him safe and sound. 28 And he was angry,
and would not go in: therefore came his father out,
and entreated him. 29 And he answering said
to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee,
neither transgressed I at any time thy
commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid,
that I might make merry with my friends: 30 But as
soon as this thy son was come, which hath
devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for
him the fatted calf. 31 And he said unto him, Son,
thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 It

was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Whether or not it actually happened, this speaks of an amazing grace that is available for those who would only: 1) repent and return to God or 2) let go of petty envy and enjoy God's love.

As with the two sons, if you left (backslid) and came back as did what some call "the prodigal son", God loves you. If you never left and remained faithful, God loves you too.



October 11

Psalm 90:10

"70-80 Years Average?"

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

From what I've been able to find, a "score" is 20 years. So, threescore years is 60 years. Ten years added to that is 70 years. Hence, fourscore years is 80 years.

This writing reminds me of the writings in Ecclesiasticus about death and the miseries of

life. Here, it seems to be saying: People live roughly 80 years and of those years, there is "labour and sorrow" then we die and "fly away".

I wouldn't be surprised if that religious hymn, "I'll Fly Away" came from this verse, but I don't know if this flying away was intended to be a happy thing. The tone of it seems to indicate it's just a matter of fact—even possibly somewhat a disappointment.

Perhaps as we get older, or at any age, when we hear about people dying, we may think about our own life span. We would do well to be concerned about the *then and there* more than the *here and now* because whether we reach 70, 80, more (or less), we do not live in these bodies forever.



October 12

1 Corinthians 6:19,20

"The Body Temple"

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Don't you know the purpose of your body? As a Believer you are to think of yourself, specifically your body, as a sacred place which houses the Holy Ghost. You are not to think of yourself as owning yourself because you have been bought. Messiah has paid a price for you. So then, you are to revere God in your body and in your spirit. All of you—every part of yourself belongs to God.

Bought with a price? Not your own? Really?! Some may be uncomfortable with that concept or may even take offence to such expression. However, it's actually an honor and a security feature, if you will, to not be one's OWN.

As such, true Believers do not have the responsibility of paying for inherent human sin. Since the penalty of such has been paid, by the blood of Christ, we're bought. And rather than being something humiliating, it's a very, very, *very* good thing.

It's a great thing, in fact, because were we required to pay that sin penalty, there would literally be hell to pay. Eternity in hell is the price that must be paid, according to Scripture, for those who are NOT bought—who are their own.

Therefore, we who ARE "bought with a price" and are not our own, ought to glorify God in our bodies and spirits. Our beings (bodies and spirits) are to be as if they were most sacred places, temples, because they rightfully belong to God.



October 13

Ecclesiasticus 50:27-29
"Exercised in Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge"

27 Jesus the son of Sirach of Jerusalem hath written in this book, the instruction of understanding and knowledge, who out of his heart poured forth wisdom. 28 Blessed is he that shall be exercised in these things, and he that layeth them up in his heart, shall become wise. 29 For if he do them, he shall be strong to all things, for the light of the Lord leadeth him, who giveth wisdom to the godly: blessed be the Lord for ever. Amen. Amen.

Imagine that—instructions for understanding, knowledge, and heart-felt wisdom with attached blessings! There is a specific blessing of wisdom given to those who are exercised (practiced) in these things and who lay them

up in their hearts.

Additionally, those who “do them” are granted strength in the face of all things. The light of the LORD will lead them. It is the LORD who gives wisdom and is blessed forever.

This passage says that in this book (Ecclesiasticus or Sirach), the instruction of understanding and knowledge and poured out wisdom from a person’s heart (Jesus, the son of Sirach) is available. But how can you ever get that, from that source, if that source is removed? If you don’t have access to it because someone has told you those books are bad or if you’ve never heard of them, how can you even investigate?



October 14

Ecclesiasticus 40:1

“Difficulties By Design”

Great travail is created for every man, and an heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things.

It could be depressing to think about life this way or to think about death at all for some, so

should we just ignore these words?

That would be pointless because the fact remains that travail, even great travail (labor, work, difficulty, sorrow…), is set for humankind *as the result of sin*. Some seem to have travail much less or much more than others, but apparently some degree of difficulty or hardship is the case for everyone and physical death is certainly a guaranteed reality for all people.

Why would these words be a part of Scripture? It's not "positive". It's not even instructive? What's the point?

From this, we may be able to see that whatever challenges we experience, others have already, do presently, and will in the future go through similar situations. We can also use this as confirmation of other scriptures which remind us of the temporal state of this existence we call life. Maybe these are not profound words, but it is necessary to stay aware that not everything is cushy, sweet, and rosy for anyone. Even the high and mighty, the cruel and powerful, and the popular and so-called "privileged" (those who have unfair advantages and profit from systematic inequity) will die.

Facts are just facts and truth is truth regardless to how “positive” or “negative” something sounds. One fact is that there are difficulties by design. Since the fall of humankind, that has not changed.



October 15

Isaiah 49:15

“Forget You! Never!”

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

The relationship between a nursing woman and her infant is very special; it’s a uniquely tight bond. Under normal circumstances, a woman won’t abandon her nursing child. Under abnormal circumstances, however, she may. Nonetheless, God will not leave his people. This indicates an even tighter bond than possibly the tightest earthly bond.

The take-away is that God loves his people and his people never need to worry about being abandoned by God.

October 16

1 Corinthians 15:23

"The Order of Things"

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Everything has a proper order. This is so in the spiritual realm as well. Believers will be "made alive" (verse 22) in a pre-determined order: Christ first, then those who belong to Christ will also be made alive. This resurrection will occur "at his coming" which is when Yeshua comes to earth to collect his faithful. That's the order of spiritual things.

October 17

Acts 26:15-18

"Persecution with Purpose"

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their

eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Jesus was no longer on earth in human form, yet Paul had been persecuting Jesus. How so? Paul was doing that by severely persecuting Jesus' followers.

Jesus appeared to Paul telling him he would be persecuted with a purpose. That purpose was to made a minister (servant) and witness of present and future things.

Paul's mission would be to open the eyes of Gentiles and to turn them from darkness to light—from the power of Satan to the power of God. The purpose of doing that was so they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among those who are **sanctified by faith in Jesus**.

Jesus was sending Paul to the very people from whom he would have to deliver him. It was persecution with a distinct purpose.

October 18

John 1:12

"Power to Become God's Sons"

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

All who received Messiah, who believed on his name, obtained power to become the sons of God. Christ, himself, gave them that power.

October 19

John 3:36

"You Can Deal With *This* or You Can Deal With *That*"

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Here, as within many places in Scripture, we may see a clear contrast. These absolutes present us with a choice for our eternal futures.

We can be of those who have everlasting life because we believe on the Son. That's one choice. On the other hand, we can be of those who will not see life because the

wrath of God lives on them. It's also a choice.

One's eternity is about what one believes and everyone will deal with either *this* consequence or *that* consequence.

October 20

Ecclesiasticus 37:7-16

"Where To Get Advice"

7 Every counselor extoleth counsel; but there is some that counseleth for himself. 8 Beware of a counselor, and know before what need he hath (for he will counsel for himself) lest he cast the lot upon thee: 9 And say unto thee, Thy way is good: and afterward he stand on the other side, to see what shall befall thee. 10 Consult not with one that suspecteth thee: and hide thy counsel from such as envy thee. 11 Neither consult with a woman touching her of whom she is jealous; neither with a coward in matters of war, nor with a merchant concerning exchange; nor with a buyer of selling; nor with an envious man of thankfulness; nor with an unmerciful man touching kindness; nor with the slouthful for any work; nor with an hireling for a year, of finishing work; nor with an idle servant of much business: Hearken not unto these in

any matter of counsel. [12] But be continually with a godly man, whom thou knowest to keep the commandments of the Lord, whose mind is according to thy mind, and will sorrow with thee, if thou shalt miscarry. [13] And let the counsel of thine own heart stand: for there is no man more faithful unto thee than it. [14] For a man's mind is sometime wont to tell him more than seven watchmen, that sit above in an high tower. [15] And above all this pray to the most high, that he will direct thy way in truth. [16] Let reason go before every enterprise, and counsel before every action.

["wont" – one's customary behavior; accustomed to doing something. Ex: Joe, as was his wont, slept during the evening lecture.]

Advice. Counsel. Instruction.
Leading. Guidance.

From whom should a Believer take his or her direction? The most expensive professional? The one with the highest academic degrees? The graduate of the "best" schools. Whomever is available? Whomever has the best price? The highest recommended? A pastor or church counselor? Whomever makes you feel

the best about yourself? Parents? Friends? Children? Newspaper advice columns? People in coffee shops? Bartenders?

This passage warns that any counselor can give advice but some do so with ulterior motives which benefit themselves.

For years media has strongly pushed people to go to licensed therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other such so-called "mental health professionals" for help and advice. It has been and currently is glamorized in many, many sitcoms, TV series', and films. Viewers are constantly told that going to them is the popular, acceptable, and the right thing to do. Yet, little to no criteria is given for selecting one in media or in real life.

We read in this part of Ecclesiasticus to BEWARE of a counselor and to know, in advance, what he (or she) really wants. They can be selfish and they can be sneaky. They can set you up for failure, then sit back to see how badly their advice affected your life.

This passage gives specifics on who not to take advice from and to whom one should adhere. From reading this, we can learn a lot about where to get advice.

October 21

John 6:44-47

"Father-Drawn, Father-Taught, With Father Forever"

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

The heavenly Father, the same One who sent Christ to earth, pulls people to Christ. How? That heavenly Father teaches and when people hear and have understood, they will come to Christ. Those who believe Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, have gained everlasting life. It's all spiritual. "Father-Drawn, Father-Taught, With Father Forever.

October 22

Ecclesiasticus 50:22

"Only Wonderful Things"

Now therefore bless ye the God of all, which only doth wonderous things every where,

which exalteth our days from the womb, and dealeth with us according to his mercy.

[See Psalm 72:18, Ecclesiasticus 31:9 ("wonderous", "wondrous"]

On a good day, these words are beautiful and comforting. When things aren't going so well, however, such writings could be... shall we say, less than consoling. That's the way it is with almost any words. Our current situations and emotions can shine on or shadow our reception. So, when we read or hear parts of Scripture which may seem unrealistic or too sugary sweet to be real, we can know that despite whatever is happening in our lives, God is actually doing only wonderful and merciful things—even when it doesn't seem like it or where we don't recognize it.



October 23

Numbers 23:19

"Said It, Meant It"

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Scripture says that unlike humans, God does

not lie or go back on His words. If He said it, He will do it. He'll make good on His promises.

We, though, have to be sure it is God who made the promises rather than some person *saying* God made specific promises or guarantees to us as individuals.



October 24

Ecclesiasticus 39:5-8,12

"A Most High-centered Mind"

5 He will give his heart to resort* early to the Lord that made him, and will pray before the most high, and will open his mouth in prayer, and make supplication for his sins. 6 When the great Lord will, he shall be filled with the spirit of understanding: he shall pour out wise sentences, and give thanks unto the Lord in his prayer. 7 He shall direct his counsel and knowledge, and in his secrets shall he meditate. 8 He shall shew forth that which he hath learned, and shall glory in the law of the covenant of the Lord. 8 He shall shew forth that which he hath learned, and shall glory in the law of the covenant of the Lord.

12 Yet I have more to say which I have thought upon, for I am filled as the moon at the full.**

Verses 1-4 of this chapter talk about people who have a very strong desire to go deeper into

things of God. [See January 26] They speak of one's passion for the law of the most High. This passage continues that thought.

People who are seriously into God are unique. This does not speak of those who are religious assembly attendees, or those who like to say, "I'm spiritual" while being quite casual about godly spirituality. These most High-centered souls start out by giving their hearts to God in prayer. They pray for forgiveness of their own sins.

Their prayers include pouring out wise sentences and thanksgiving. That happens when "the great Lord" fills them with the spirit of understanding. God will give guidance and the truly faithful will meditate on His secrets. They will exemplify what they have learned and will be a glory to God by their living of the law of His covenants. They're excited about it.

There was so much more to say about the most High-centered mind, but extreme enthusiasm and exhilaration prevented the writer of this passage from saying more at that time**.

**resort* – *course of action, strategy, choice*
*** John 21:25, Ecclesiasticus 39:12; 16:5; 43:32*

October 25

John 10:2-4, 27

"Hear, Follow, Know"

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Trusting in Jesus as savior of one's life is a matter of knowing, hearing, and following his voice.

Q: But how? How does one know, hear, and follow the voice of Jesus?

A: Rightly divided Scripture is paramount. The Holy Spirit will teach us what actually is Scripture and how to rightly divide the Scripture.

To hear, follow, and know God's voice, we must submit to YHVH.

October 26

Ecclesiasticus 38:9

"In Sickness"

My son, in thy sickness be not negligent: but pray unto the Lord, and he will make thee whole.

When you're sick, don't fail to pray to the Lord for healing.

This passage says the Lord "will" heal. However, as with other scriptures which SEEM to promise various types of physical blessings, this passage must also be rightly divided.

There is no guarantee that God will heal *every* Believer *every* time any more than he will give *everything* requested. There are parameters. There is criteria. There are times and seasons for everything. If every Believer were to be healed every time, no Believer would ever die.

So, the point in this verse is to instruct not to be neglectful in asking God for healing when you're sick. It's not a demand of God. It's a petition.

October 27

John 10:5,14

"A Stranger vs. The Good Shepherd"

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Not only will True Believers not follow "a stranger", but they will flee from him or her. They personally know the caring guide and protector, the Good Shepherd, just as he knows them.

A stranger is not necessarily an unknown person; it's most often a strange doctrine spoken through a known person. It's strange, not because you've never heard it and not because pastor such-in-such doesn't teach it. It's strange because it is not Scripture and it's not Holy Spirit.

For example, when your trusted, beloved pastor starts telling you to put a chair in front of you and pray to it, not only should you refuse to follow that, but you should also flee! It's the voice of a stranger. It's stranger danger.

Only intimacy with Holy Scripture and deep relationship with Holy Spirit, knowing, will help discern a stranger versus the good shepherd.

October 28

Ecclesiasticus 31:25-31

"Wine: Pros and Cons"

25 Shew not thy valiantness in wine, for wine hath destroyed many. 26 The furnace proveth the edge by dipping: so doth wine the hearts of the proud by drunkenness. 27 Wine is as good as life to a man if it be drunk moderately: what life is then to a man that is without wine? for it was made to make men glad. 28 Wine measurably drunk, and in season, bringeth gladness of the heart and cheerfulness of the mind. 29 But wine drunken with excess, maketh bitterness of the mind, with brawling and quarreling. 30 Drunkenness increaseth the rage of a fool till he offend, it diminisheth strength, and maketh wounds. 31 Rebuke not thy neighbor at the wine, and despise him not in his mirth: give him no despiteful words, and press not upon him with urging him (to drink.)

Don't be proud about how much you can drink. Alcohol has destroyed many lives. When a pot

is boiling hot, its contents spill over the edge. Similarly, pride pours out and drips all over drunkards.

Wine is fine as long as its handled with moderation. It could actually be a good thing and bring joy to life. In a safe quantity and at the right times, wine can be great. Excessive drinking, however, messes up the mind and creates mess such as “brawling and quarrelling”. Alcoholism also intensifies anger to the point of rage and offensiveness. Further, it weakens and harms relationships. Even so, it’s best to neither rebuke a drunkard nor encourage him or her to drink.

Thoughts:
A biblical perspective on many things, which are often prohibited or frowned upon in some societies, is that some things are acceptable when simply done in moderation. The problem is that not everyone can practice moderation. There are some who have what is termed “addictive personalities” and they just have to altogether abstain from certain things.

On the other extreme are those who pretend to not drink alcohol, for example, but who secretly do so. This scriptural passage gives liberty with logic. It tells of some pros and

cons of wine/ drinking/ alcohol and guides in understanding even greater principles with regard to indulgences.

October 29

Titus 3:5

"Regeneration: Washing, Renewing"

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Here is another scriptural passage, in addition to Ephesians 2:8, 9, which keeps us in check should we ever begin to think we did, could have done, or do save ourselves. Only by God's mercy are we saved. It's a regeneration process. We are washed and renewed by the Holy Ghost.

October 30

John 10:11-13

"Wolves and Hirelings"

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Hirelings leave sheep vulnerable to attacks and to being devoured by wolves. The good shepherd does not do that. It's all about commitment, care, and courage versus the lack of such. Wolves and Hirelings are dangerous.

October 31

Psalms 46:10

"Be Still"

**Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the heathen,
I will be exalted in the earth.**

Sometimes we may become so busy that we do not recognize just how unstill and less than tranquil we have actually become. Whether it be working to make a living or to make a fortune, or caring for families, or enjoying leisure and entertainment, or even in religious activities, we can be very busy. In this verse, we hear the words, "be still". What does that mean?

Still is not just being physically motionless or immobile. Stillness, here, is a mental state of calm expectation. It is personal quietness in the presence of God. This kind of being still is deep reverence which yields

deep revelation.

When we become the biblical kind of still, we will know the Almighty really is God. That is when God will be exalted among heathens. That is when God will be exalted throughout earth. How so? Our stillness will be reflected in our daily lives such that our thinking will change from world-think to God-think. Our attitudes and actions will change from self-focus to God-focus. That is the condition which can bring about the exaltation of God among rejecters and haters of Christ.

This is not any stillness of *vegetating* in front of a T.V., tablet, phone, or computer screen. It also is not sitting with legs folded and arms out while chanting. This quietness happens when the True Follower of God stops, gets off the world's merry-go-round, and goes into the dark tent away from the fairgrounds to be enlightened by YHVH.

When those who profess to be children of the most High regularly become this kind of still, life on earth will be better and better and better.

November 1

Ecclesiasticus 41:1-4

“Death: Is It Good or Bad—for YOU?”

1 O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things: yea unto him that is yet able to receive meat? 2 O death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy, and unto him whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age, and is vexed with all things, and to him that despaireth and hath lost patience. 3 Fear not the sentence of death, remember them that have been before thee, and that come after, for this is the sentence of the Lord over all flesh. 4 And why art thou against the pleasure of the most High? there is no inquisition in the grave, whether thou have lived ten, or an hundred, or a thousand years.

Oh, Death: for people who have a luxurious life and everything they need and want, the thought of you is so bitter. They have nothing to stress them and they are prosperous in whatever they pursue. They can always get more and more and can eat whatever, whenever, and how much they want. They don’t want to see you coming because that’s

the end of their good times. But Death, you're a welcomed sight to the needy, weak, old, and to those who live in misery. The tired and hopeless don't mind the thought of you one bit.

People, don't fear death. People have died who lived before you and people will die who will live after you're gone. This is just how it is. It's the Lord's ruling on all flesh-kind. Why try to fight what God is going to do anyway? Death will come and that's that. What are you going to do—try to interrogate God from your grave? Whether you live 10, 100, or 1000 years, and whether it's a good or bad thing for you, as a flesh-and-blood being, eventually you're going to die.



November 2

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

"Gold, Silver, Precious Stones, Wood, Hay, & Stubble"

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of

what sort it is. [14] If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. [15] If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Jesus the Christ is the foundation and no one can arrange a better one. Now, you can build. You can build gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble, but every person's work will be made known. Why? Time will tell. It will be made known one day and it will be revealed by fire. That means everything else will peel away from it and only the good and strong will survive. The fire is the tester. It's going to prove what's really there. If a person's work is good, it'll handle the fire and stand. Plus, those with survivable works will be rewarded. Those whose works were burned away won't be rewarded at all. It'll be a loss but they, themselves, will be saved, although it will be through fire.

With "fire" having so many levels of meaning, I have to suppose the last part speaks of experiencing great difficulties. The Great Bible says, "...nevertheless, yet as it were through fire."

November 3

John 3:18

"Either Un-Condemned or Already Condemned"

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

It's plain. Whomever believes on Jesus is not condemned. Whomever does not believe on Jesus is condemned. This is not a future thing. It's a current thing. One is already one or the other. The issue is whether or not one believes in the name of the only begotten Son of God. That's the determining factor with regard to eternal salvation. That's biblical truth. There's no middle ground. People are either un-condemned, or already condemned.

November 4

John 4:14

"Thirsty or Thirst-free?"

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Whomever drinks of Jesus' spiritual water, the unique kind of water that only he can give, will never again be spiritually thirsty. That water is a non-stop flow which leads to everlasting life.

November 5

Acts 16:25-34

"Sometimes AFTER Earthquakes"

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he

set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Godly people were imprisoned. Even while in that condition, they were praying and praising. A major earthquake hit that was so powerful it shook the foundation of the prison and caused the doors to be opened and restraints to be loose enough that the prisoners could escape.

The guard had been napping on the job. When he awakened and looked around, he thought the prisoners had escaped. Apparently the guard felt he would be so severely punished if that happened that taking his own life would be better. With his sword, he was about to do just that. Paul, however, shouted for him not do it. He told the guard all the prisoners were still there. The guard's heart was changed and he wanted, as it's said, "I'll have what they're having". He wanted to be saved as the men were who had a chance to escape but didn't. The guard believed and was baptized. Somehow, the guard even managed to take Paul and some other prisoners to his house.

All of these wonderful things happened—but only AFTER the earthquake. Things had to tremble and quake before a stubborn heart would, in humility, break. Stuff had to rumble,

loosen, and move so salvation could make it through. It was after the earthquake that the man understood that he could be saved for good.

In life, not everything will be sweet and bubbly. The Believer can pray and praise the most High even during confining and restricting situations. Not everything will be pleasant and sometimes after earthquakes there will be true freedom.

November 6

Romans 8:1
"Condemnation-Free Conditions"

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Walking "after the flesh" rather than "after the Spirit"...what does that look like? Why do some whose lives resemble more flesh than Spirit profess to be "*in* Christ Jesus"?

Is it justifiable to live in a way that is self-gratifying, after the flesh, and still expect "no condemnation" (which is for those who walk "after the Spirit"—God honoring)?

November 7

Ephesians 4:30

"Sealed unto the Day of Redemption"

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Do not grieve the holy Spirit of God. You are sealed by God's holy Spirit both now and to the day of liberation.

November 8

Ecclesiasticus 47:8

"Loving Your Maker"

In all his works he praised the holy one most High, with words of glory, with his whole heart he sung songs, and loved him that made him.

That's love!

In ALL his works, he (David) "praised the holy one most High" with "words of glory" with his "whole heart".

He sang songs and loved the One who make him. That's actually showing love; it's expressing love for your Maker.

November 9

Romans 5:3-5

"Tribulations, Patience, Experience, Hope"

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

We glory in tribulations means we can still be thankful and still give praise "in" or during tough times. In the midst of the storm, we can have peace because we know that these sometimes harsh situations have a definite purpose.

This passage shows a process. Tribulation promotes patience which, in turn, gives opportunities for experience. Then experience brings about hope. Hope prevents us from the shame of being without the love of God. The Holy Ghost, which was given to us, causes God's love to fill

our hearts.

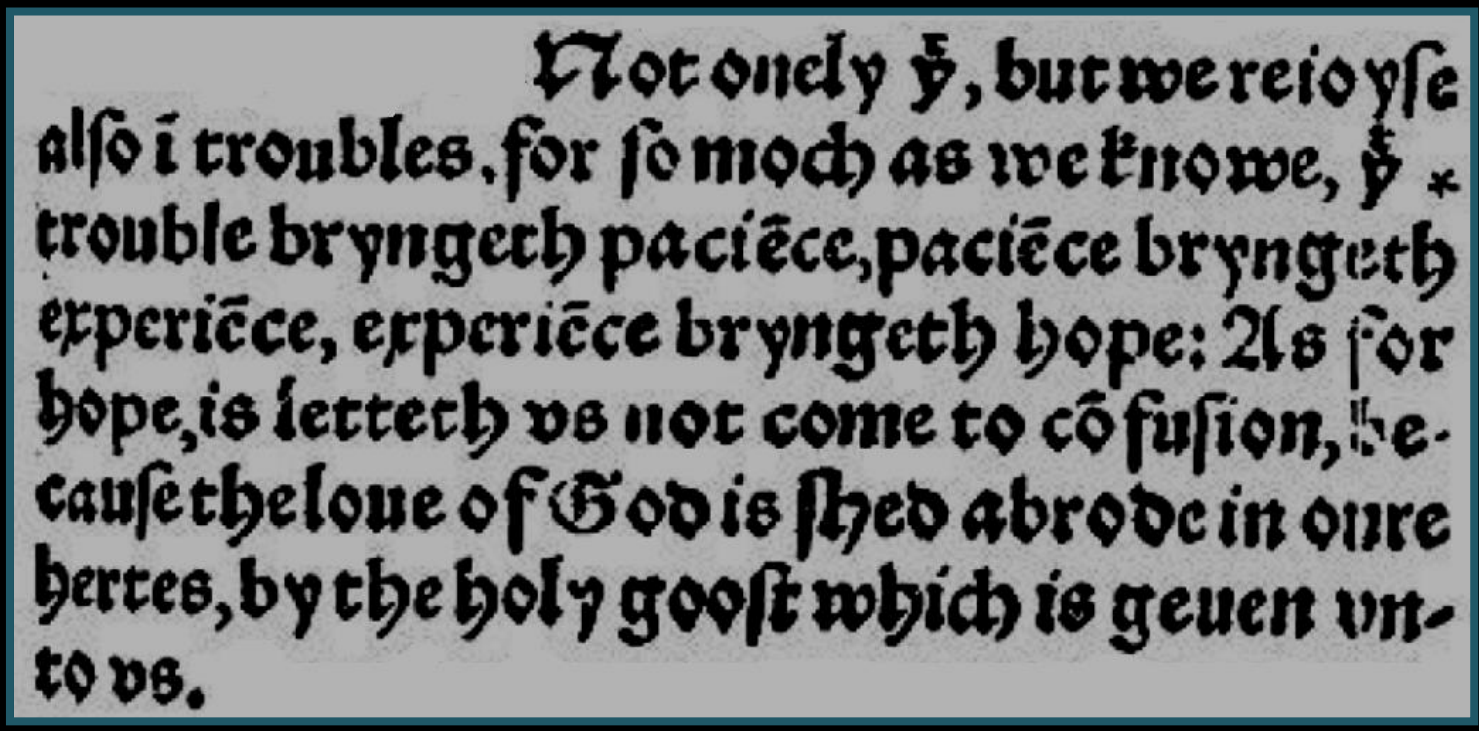
So indirectly, tribulation has the ability to increase the expression of God's love within ourselves. That is the case for the mind and heart which is submitted to God.

Note that it does not say "our" love is increased, but rather that God's love is shed abroad in our hearts. It's the love of God, not our love, that is advanced. The bad times gives God a chance to show that our Creator really does love and take care of us in ways that were we to experience only good times, God could never show. In other words, we need the whole tribulation, patience, experience, hope process to allow God's love to be manifested within us in increasing levels—shed abroad.

It's important to understand that it is God's love, not our love, that grows or spreads. If we misinterpret this passage to mean we're going to be automatically more sweet, happy, or loving due to tribulations, we may be quite disappointed. Again, the

tribulation process makes it so that God's love (caring, nurturing) can be greatly expressed within our hearts.

Coverdale, 1535


Not onely ȳ, but we reioyse
also ī troubles, for ſo moch as we knowe, ȳ *
trouble bryngeth pacīēce, pacīēce bryngeth
experīēce, experīēce bryngeth hope: As for
hope, is letteth vs not come to cō fuſion, be-
cauſe the loue of God is ſhed abrode in oure
hertes, by the holy gooſt which is geuen vn-
to vs.

Not only that, but we rejoice also in troubles, for so much as we know, that trouble bringeth patience, patience bringeth experience, experience bringeth hope: As for hope, it letteth us not come to confusion, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The Coverdale clarifies two points. First, by using the word "troubles", it indicates situations don't have to be as extreme as the

word “tribulations” implies; it can be any trouble to which this applies.

Secondly, the word “confusion” makes much more sense in context to the rest of the passage. There’s a difference between not being “ashamed” (AKJV) and not coming to “confusion” or being confused (Coverdale). While hardships could possibly cause shame, it makes more sense that seemingly unjustified grief may more likely cause **confusion** than shame. Why would someone be ashamed of something bad happening to them? Perhaps if someone bragged that nothing bad could happen to them, they might be ashamed of troubles. Job, of the Old Testament, wasn’t ashamed of the misery heaped on him, but he sure was confused.

Confusion is similar to saying, “Why is this happening? Where are you, God? What’s going on?” From the Coverdale, we are told that any of these troublesome things happening don’t have to leave us confused because the love of God is in action.

So, the entire process of tribulations and troubles, patience, experience, and hope is ultimately a good thing.

November 10

Colossians 3:4

"Christ = Life"

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Christ is our life. When he appears, we'll appear with him in glory. Some say when he appears, we'll disappear, but this does not say that. But if it takes that for us to appear with Christ, that's fine. The important thing is that, first and foremost, Christ must be our life.

November 11

1 Peter 1:3

"Begotten Us Again"

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Because of the resurrection of Jesus—his return from death, we are reborn. God has made this the case out of His abundant mercy. Bless Him.

November 12

Hebrews 10:14

“1 4ever”

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Jesus has forever perfected those who are set apart. It only took one offering to do that. Only Jesus could have done it because only Jesus was and is without sin.

November 13

Luke 19:10

“Seek & Save Quest”

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

God is not trying to push people away. He has sent Jesus on a quest to find and save those who are lost.

November 14

John 8:32

“My Truth, Your Truth, THE Truth”

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

This is straightforward. It says and means you will know the truth. That truth will cause

you to be free.

It does not say when you *tell* the truth, it will make you free from the consequences of your behavior or from judgments in connection to legalities.

Knowledge of, in this case, acceptance of Truth, THE truth, frees from the penalty of sin.

November 15

Ecclesiasticus 37:1-4

"Kinds of Friends"

1 Every friend sayeth, I am his friend also: but there is a friend which is only a friend in name.
2 Is it not a grief unto death, when a companion and friend is turned to an enemy?
3 O wicked imagination, whence camest thou in to cover the earth with deceit?
4 There is a companion, which rejoiceth in the prosperity of a friend: but in the time of trouble will be against him.

Anyone can claim to be a friend, but not everyone is a real friend.

There are some friends who are so in name only. They call themselves your friend, but their actions prove otherwise. Isn't it sad when a friend and companion, or at least

someone you thought was your friend, becomes an enemy?

There are fair-weather, deceitful, friends who will be with you only when things are going well and money is flowing. However, when there's trouble, they won't support you. In fact, they'll go against you.

November 16

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

"The Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth"

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Some take pride in ungodly life practices of themselves or that of others. Here, we are told that glorying, feeling really good, about such is not acceptable. When you accept a little, you soon embrace a lot. Metaphorically speaking, do not use the kind of bread (behavior) that keeps rising (worsening).

Instead, feast on the good kind—sincerity and truth.

November 17

Acts 20:27-32

"Tearful Night & Day Warnings"

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

This is a warning that deception is waiting to destroy fellowships of Believers. Notice some key words and phrases: "grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock", "speaking perverse things", "watch,

and remember", "I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears".

November 18

Jeremiah 9:3

"Bent Tongues"

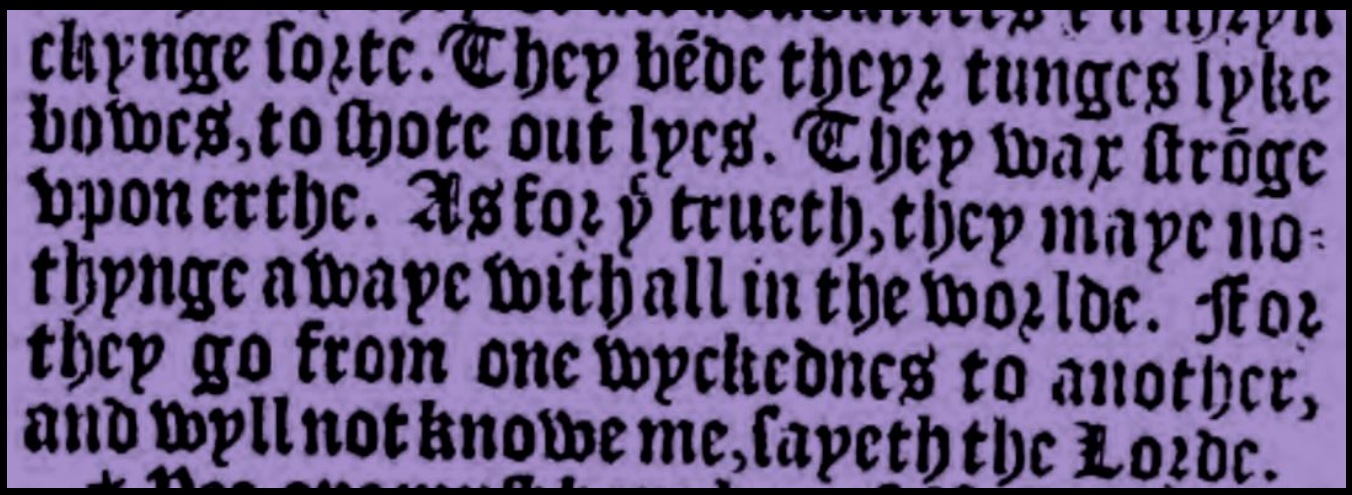
And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord.

I think it's safe to say God does not like lies. God was saying, according to the prophet Jeremiah,:

they bend their tongues as an archer bends his bow, but the arrows which are shot, are lies. His people aren't strong and skilled in truth. Nonetheless, they are quite proficient when it comes to lying.

They cover the earth with lies. They proceed from evil to evil, meaning they go from one evil thing to another evil thing. Though they are his people, they don't even know God.

The Great Bible, 1537


clynge sorte. They bēde theyr tunges lyke
bowes, to shote out lyes. They wax strōge
vpon erthe. As for ỳ trueth, they maye no-
thynge awaye withall in the worlde. For
they go from one wyckednes to another,
and wyll not knowe me, sayeth the Lorde.

They bend their tongues like bows, to shoot out lies. They wax strong upon earth. As for the truth, they may nothing away withal in the world. For they go from one wickedness to another, and will not know me, saith the Lord.

Jeremiah was considering the wickedness of his people. This chapter starts with him saying he wishes he could get away from them. Then, it seems as if Jeremiah's weeping turns into God speaking through him:

> They bend their tongues like bows and shoot out lies. They are powerful and influential on earth. As for as the truth, they have nothing to do with it the whole world over. They go from one wickedness to another and refuse to know me.

The Great Bible says more than the AKJV:

They wax strong upon earth. As for the truth, they may nothing away withal in the world.

Also, notice the negative vs. the affirmative in the two versions:

AKJV:
"they are NOT valiant"

Great Bible:
"they wax strong"

The AKJV seems to justify the way they chose to word it by saying they are not strong "for the truth".

Regardless to the translation, it suffices to say that lying was so prevalent, that it was vexing to the prophet and to God.



November 19

1 Timothy 4:1

"Seducing Spirits & Doctrines of Devils"

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

When did these "latter times" not exist? When did some NOT depart from the faith

and gave heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils?

November 20

Matthew 4:1-11

"It Is Written Again"

1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give

thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Jesus combated temptations with "it is written". Those words were properly understood and correctly applied. It's an example and lesson to followers of Messiah.

 November 21

Titus 2:1-15

"Walk This Way, Talk This Way"

1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. 6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. 7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having

no evil thing to say of you. [9] Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things not answering again; [10] Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. [11] For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, [12] Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; [13] Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; [14] Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. [15] These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Purloin – steal
Fidelity – loyalty, faithfulness, reliability, trustworthiness, devotion, commitment

Elitist? Sexist? Is this, and similar passages, mere outdated jargon which lends itself to ridicule? Or, on the other hand, do such verses demand a closer look into the time these things were written, the culture of the people to whom these things were written, and the particular translators?

What would God have 21st century Believers do with words like these, which have been

canonized as Scripture? What was the example of Messiah, the ultimate example to Christ-followers, concerning the value, treatment, and expectations of men, women, children, servants and masters?

November 22

1 Maccabees 12:9

"Comfort Scripture"

Therefore we also, albeit we need none of these things, that we have the holy books of scripture in our hands to comfort us,

They were glad for the letters of friendship, but more surely valued the Scripture. They said they didn't even need the letters, which were mentioned several times in the passage, confirming their league to one another as, apparently, their bond was established. They were very pleased to have the holy books of Scripture in their hands to comfort them.

Comfort food? How about comfort Scripture instead?

November 23

Galatians 5:16

"Spirit vs. Flesh"

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

For Deeper Thought & Meditation:

† What's the difference between spiritual and physical?
† How can physical beings "walk in the Spirit"?
† What does "the Spirit" really mean?
† Of course sinners won't care, but why would Believers want to avoid satisfying lust?

November 24

Galatians 6:7-9

"Sowing & Reaping, Now & Later"

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Don't believe the lies. God is not mocked He is not made fun of, or ridiculed. God is not being made a fool of by people. Humans really do reap whatever we sow. The principle of get what you give is in force. People will bring in what they put out. Build flesh, and yield corruption. Build of the Spirit, and yield everlasting life.

So, don't get frustrated with doing the right

things while seemingly going unrewarded. Don't think those who seem to be advancing while sinning won't be punished. Don't get to the point that you give up because of the way things appear. Hold on. Don't quit. Don't faint. If we sow the right way now, we'll reap rewards later.

November 25

1 Peter 5:8,9

"Adversary? Afflictions? Roaring Lion? Resist!"

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

You, True Believer, are dealing with an enemy—an adversary who has no love and no mercy for you. That enemy is called the devil.

That spirit is real and seeks every opportunity to devour. You are to steadfastly resist this adversary "in the faith". It's by faith in Christ that you will be able to overcome and you should also know that your brothers and sisters all over the world fight and win the same battles.

November 26

James 1:25

"The Perfect Law of Liberty: Look Into It, Remember It, Do It, Non-stop"

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The perfect law of liberty. What is that? I would describe it as doing the right and good thing because you want to, rather than because you have to do it. It's an exercise in the freedom of **faith**. It's when you know that even when you fail, your salvation is not dependent on mandated acts. Even so, godly actions are what you pursue by choice. You have the liberty to do *this* or *that*, but out of love for God and for others, you don't let your liberty become a stumbling block.

November 27

Ecclesiasticus 27:5

"The Trial of Man"

The furnace proveth the potter's vessel: so the trial of man is in his reasoning.

Prove:
1) to test or try;
2) establish or demonstrate;
3) shows by experience.

Question: What does a furnace do to a potter's vessel? What does a kiln do to a pottery worker's creation?

Answer: Heats, hardens, dries, melts, chemically changes properties.

How a person really is, WHO he or she really is (the deepest and truest self), is revealed. More accurately, how we think (our method of reasoning), is made known by the way we handle trials and hardships. What's the end result of the personal challenge? After the harsh experience, after the fires, how does our pottery (our life) look?

Just as a furnace causes intensive changes in pottery and establishes what that clay really is, so will hard, even horrible, experiences produce changes and demonstrates how a person really is (on the inside) how they think, believe or reason. When we have been *heated* with some of the hottest temperatures possible

(put to the most grueling tests), those furnace temperatures produce changes within us—even to the point of revealing the way we think.

November 28

1 John 4:1

"Try the Spirits"

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Trying or testing the spirits is needed in everything. But how? Is it the Spirit of God as supported by rightly divided Scripture or, instead, is it the spirit of anti-Christ with any of its doctrines? Does it declare Jesus as the only begotten son of God? Does it, rather, relegate Jesus to a good man or one of many prophets or just a spiritual concept? Whatever "it" may be: a teaching, an attitude, a belief system, a practice etc, if it denies Jesus as Messiah, it is against Christ.

Who says? 1 John, chapter 4, verses 2 and 3 says: Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh

is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of

God: and this is that spirit of antichrist... (AKJV)

November 29

John 16:32,33

"Alone? Not Alone!— Peace, Tribulation, Overcome"

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

QUESTION: Why should I be of good cheer amidst guaranteed tribulation and how does Christ's having overcome the world help me?

ANSWER: While these words were spoken to a specific group of people during a specific time concerning a specific prophecy, there are applications for us today. This passage was, and is, genuine comfort which is based on truth; it is not a pacifier of false security. Christ was saying: I'm telling you these things in hopes that you will have peace IN ME. You will have really hard times while you're in this world, but cheer up. That's not the end of the

story. I have already overcome the penalty imposed upon humans.

I have already overcome so you don't have to worry about paying the price of built-in sin of humankind. I've already paid it. So, despite much suffering that you WILL endure while you're on earth, be comforted by the reality that I've taken care of things. It's IN ME that you have the GUARANTEE of some better thing.

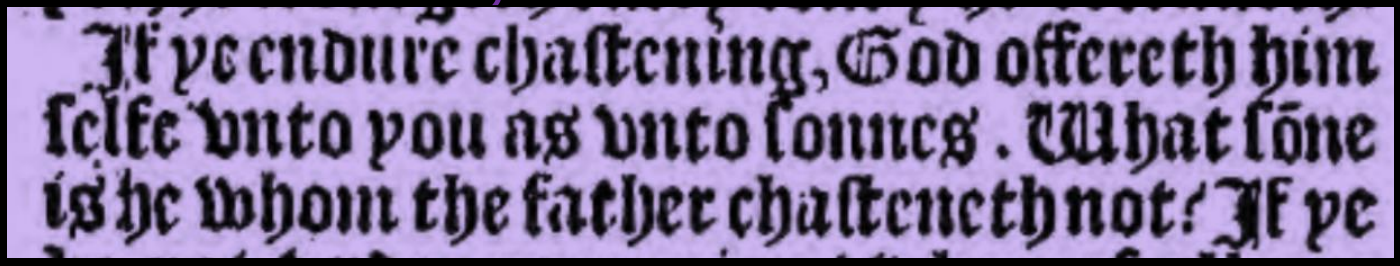
November 30

Hebrews 12:7

"Caring Correction"

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

The Great Bible, 1540


If ye endure chastening, God offereth him
selfe vnto you as vnto sonnes. What sone
is he whom the father chastenyth not? If ye

If ye endure chastening, God offereth himself unto you as unto sons. What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

The heavenly Father gives caring correction to those he loves. That's what good earthly fathers

do. God, as the Great Bible words it, "offers himself" to you in this way. Understanding chastening as an offering of God to us, makes it all more personal and then we can appreciate the discipline and correction of the Father.

December 1

Ephesians 1:13 (AKJV)

"Already SEALED — With Promises"

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

You've been sealed with promises from the time you heard "the word of truth" and trusted.

[Matthew's Bible, 1537 – Ephesians 1:13]
In whom also ye (after that ye heard the word of truth / I mean the Gospel of your salvation / wherein ye believed) were **sealed with the holy spirit of promises**.

December 2

Philippians 4:11-13

"I'm Alright—Really!"

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound:

every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. [13] I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

This is a favorite feel-good passage for many online posts and especially sermons. It's often used as an ego booster and pump to the tire of "self-esteem", but what's actually meant by the Scripture?

"I don't want anything", Paul was saying, "I can handle the good and the bad because I have **learned** how to do that. I can be content with whatever the situation may be. I know how to handle put-downs and build-ups. I've been **instructed** on dealing with being full and being hungry, with having everything I want, and lacking what I need. I can do all things through the strength of Christ."

Having learned and having been instructed is most often overlooked in this passage. Paul had to have personally experienced and/or witnessed many situations to have that wide a range of coping skills. Sometimes one has to go through, endure, hardships to

know how to go through them at a later time.

Not everyone can handle being abased. Being lowered, belittled, or humiliated beyond what some feel they deserve can cause some extreme anxiety resulting in harsh reactions such as harm to self or to others. They “can do all things”, as long as those “all things” cause them to feel good.

There are some who don’t handle abounding so well. One might think that would be easy enough to do but there are those who become boastful, wasteful, reckless, or arrogant when things are going great for them. They don’t handle their abundance with kindness—real class. No, they haven’t learned how to do that so they mock others who have less and cause them to have even less.

There are joys and pains. There is sunshine and rain. Paul was saying either way, not just one way—the good stuff, I’m alright. Because I have learned, because I have been instructed, and because Christ strengthens me, I’m really alright.

December 3

James 5:10,11

"The Correct Kind of Happy"

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Have you ever heard of "happy" and "endure" in the same sentence? What's a correct kind of happiness? It's when, like the patience of Job, you have been through something and have endured some tough times. The prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord are examples of having suffered affliction and yet have experienced his gentle, tender mercies. That's the correct kind of happy.

December 4

Romans 4:5

"Faith in Christ"

But to him that WORKETH NOT, but BELIEVETH on him that justifieth the ungodly, his FAITH is counted for RIGHTEOUSNESS.

That has to be SOME high payment, some POWERFUL sacrifice, that by just believing on Him, sin, wickedness, evil, wrongdoing… ungodliness is totally removed!

Faith in Christ, "to him that WORKETH NOT" has got to be po-wer-FUL!

December 5

Hebrews 13:8,9
"Unwavering, Consistent Beliefs"

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. 9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

Having grace as the base is the way to avoid being carried hither and yon by weird, ungodly doctrines. When we really, really understand that it is by God's grace that we are saved and that there is nothing we can do toward our own salvation, we have the foundation we need to spiritually and emotionally stay where we need to be. With grace we will be… Established. Unwavering. Consistent.

December 6

Romans 15:4

“It's All to Help Us”

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Whatever was written long ago, was written “for our learning”. WHATEVER was written… W-H-A-T-E-V-E-R was written many years ago was for us to learn from it. Anything? Anything “through patience and comfort of the SCRIPTURES” was written **so we might have hope**. Old Testament. New Testament. Apocrypha. The Prophets. Poetry. Acts of the Apostles. What YHVH said. What Yeshua said. Whatever…scriptures… all to help us.

Don’t turn your nose up at it. Don’t reject it. If it was EVER considered Scriptures, give it a chance. It may be that the very digging, itself, is opportunity for the Holy Creator to have a unique connection with you. The Holy Spirit could use your obedience to “search the Scriptures” as a way to develop your discerning skills. Whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning. It’s for our benefit. It’s all to help us.

Don't close the door to your own godly spiritual growth because someone told you "those books are bad" or "it's not part of the cannon". Whatever things were written aforetime were "written for our learning."

Find scans of older scriptures such as the Great Bible of 1540 and the Coverdale Bible Version of 1535 (known to be the oldest complete scriptures in the English language). Learn some Hebrew words, phrases or letters. Utilize it while it's still available as it is being systematically obscured. Get it while you are physically and mentally able. It's all to help us.

December 7

1 Samuel 28:3-25

"Familiar Spirits: The Endor Woman"

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. 4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. 5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. 6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and

inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.
8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. 9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? 10 And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. 11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. 13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. 14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. 16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the

LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? 17 And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: 18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. 19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. 20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. 21 And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. 22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. 23 But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. 24 And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: 25 And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

Question:
What should be the Believer's take-away from this account? It clearly shows there are, or at least were in the past, people who did/do communicate with spirits of those who are deceased.

December 8

James 1:12-16 (AKJV)

"Temptation"

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Having just recently studied the 3rd chapter of the book of Tobit from the 1540 Great Bible, I thought of Sara's beliefs on temptation. After a cruel verbal attack by another young woman, Sara defended herself then left the situation and began fasting and praying to God:

"But whosoever loveth thee and serveth thee aright, is sure of this, that if his life be tempted and proved it standeth in the trying, and if he endure in patience, he shall have a reward and be highly crowned…"

Temptation has been around for a long time. From the time of Adam and Eve, and possibly before that, temptation has caused beings to either fall or to become stronger in faith.

Falling, as a result of temptation, leads to death. On the other hand, enduring temptation, leads to reward—receiving a crown of life (being highly crowned).

December 9

Genesis 10:32, 11:1-9

"The Tower of Babel"

Genesis 10:32 **These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.**

Genesis 11:1-9 **1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter. 4 And they**

said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. 5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. 6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Questions:

- Are all humans truly descendants of Noah?
- Does this chronicle indicate that being united and being able to communicate together made humans a threat to God?
- Does this account imply that if humans were able to effectively connect with one another, particularly through verbal language, whatever they imagined to do could be

accomplished?

- Had the humans succeeded in building a structure capable of reaching heaven, what may have happened?

- What did the human beings mean by, “let us make us a name, lest we be scattered…”? How could making a name prevent them from being scattered?

- Exactly what was done to confuse the languages and cause the people to be scattered? Is there any biblical record of an earthquake being the cause? Might it have been a pandemic?

- What kind of “bricks” could they have had which could be used to reach heaven? Does such architectural technology exist today? Does this, in some way, indicate how close heaven is to earth?

- Could these words merely be a way humans devised to explain the multitude of languages? Could it be that, as a result of various cultures, Scripture translations, and thousands of years of time, an accurate account may have been lost?

- Is there a significant similarity in this story

and the account of God expelling Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden out of concern that they gain access to the tree of life and live forever?(Gen? 3:22-24)

> **22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.**

🛠 Why would God allow such information to be recorded which may be viewed as the Creator being insecure concerning His own creation? Does God fear the potential of humankind? On the other hand, does this account tell us that God will not have His authority usurped, even by His own creation?

🛠 How much did (or will) God allow? How long had the people been building toward heaven before God stopped them by refusing them the one thing they pursued— "a name", and by doing the one thing they didn't want done to them— scattering them?

🛠 How could languages change just because of distance? If people had the same language

to begin with, and were scattered into uninhabited lands where, perhaps, there were no people and no other languages, why would their language suddenly change?

Answer: Languages didn't change after the people were separated. God confounded the language "there"—on the spot of the former tower (v7, 9).

☞ Someone asked the following:
Is there a contradiction between Genesis 11:1-9 and Genesis 10:5 concerning the **one language** and **dispersing** of all the people?

A well-known site that usually pops up first or second during searches decided the whole "Tower of Babel" account was a myth. They further stated the two Genesis passages contradicted one another. It's no surprise that they, not being a godly resource and often an inaccurate one, would say such. However, there is no contradiction or disunity in the two passages.

There were a lot of people and they could all have been in one general vicinity and still be divided in areas based on dialect, families, and nations. It's just as there are people on the northern side, eastern side, southern side, and on the western side of any given

city. They will have their own families (groups, nations, cultures), areas (lands), specific lingo (tongue/dialect/slang), but they are still a part of the same city. Just because some people live in the Fresno, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles, doesn't mean they don't live in the same state of California.

Additionally, the AKJV does not say the people were "dispersed" as do some versions; it just says "divided". A pie can be divided, sliced, but still be in the same pan. There's no contradiction when read in context to the whole passage and with a mind to understand rather than to discredit.

🛠 Regardless to the lack of specifics on what happened and how it happened, could this depiction of God, at least, imply that the Creator, possesses and maintains power over humankind?

🛠 Does this passage indicate that while God has power, humans also have strong desires and thoughts which can be in competition with God?

🛠 Considering the possible propensity of humankind to resist God's authority and to rebel against the Creator's will, what can true Believers do to cooperate rather than to compete with God?

December 10

Philippians 3:7-9

"Righteousness of God by Faith"

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Whatever it is that was at one time valuable or important to me, means nothing now. It's all a good loss for a good cause—Christ. No doubt, every single thing is useless waste compared to the real value of knowing Christ as my Lord.

It's not about my own righteousness—the kind that comes from my obeying the law. True godliness has to do with the righteousness that comes about through the faith of Christ. It is the "**righteousness** which is of God **by faith**".

December 11

The Wisdom of Solomon 11:22
"Big Ole' World?"

For the whole world before thee is as a little grain of the balance, yea as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth.

The whole world is similar to a little grain on a scale. It's as a drop of moisture that falls to earth. To God, our big ole' world is not so big.

December 12

2 Corinthians 6:1-18
"Growth: Not Unequally Yoked"

1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) 3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: 4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses 5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; 6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

[8] By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; [9] As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; [10] As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. [11] O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is **enlarged**. [12] Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. [13] Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also **enlarged**. [14] Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? [15] And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? [16] And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [17] Wherefore **come out from among them**, and **be ye separate**, **saith the Lord**, and **touch not the unclean thing**; and I will receive you, [18] And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, **saith the Lord Almighty**.

The way to really grow spiritually (to enlarge), is to not be unequally yoked (in an unbalanced connection) with unbelievers.

Separate. Obey by first coming out from among them (all ties which are unequal to godliness). Then there will be growth.

December 13

Romans 13:10-14

"High Time To Wake Up"

**10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.
11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.
12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.
13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkeness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.
14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.**

It's time to wake up. Actually, it's past time for people to wake up. It's high time to wake out of sleep. It's past time to stop drinking, partying, and messy living. Grow up! "Walk honestly", as this passage exhorts. None of us has forever on earth. We're nearer our last day today than we were yesterday.

As is in present-day lingo, some are claiming they are “woke”, but no one is awake who is without Messiah as Lord and ruler over their lives. The scriptural warning is to not give any opportunity for the fulfillment or satisfaction of fleshly lusts. That’s the exact opposite of world-think which promotes self-gratification.

As long as any are living the way the world teaches and pushes, they are still heavily sedated by deception and are, therefore, deeply spiritually asleep. Yes, it’s high time to wake up.

December 14

Ephesians 4:14

“Some Stability Roun’ Here”

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

If we become spiritually mature in godliness so that we’re not tossed here and there and drift all around by “every wind of doctrine”, there might just be some stability around here.

Maturing Believers learn how to avoid

the cunning crafty deceptions by those who excel in the "art" of manipulation which is especially done through scripture-twisting.

December 15

2 Timothy 2:15

"Tim Book 2"

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

"Tim Book 2" was a way I had to remember this verse. It's the 2nd book of Timothy and its 2nd chapter. I wanted to recollect, but more importantly, I felt I needed to ingest and properly apply this passage.

Very early in my walk of faith, I saw it as crucial for spiritual success.

I needed to study. I needed to know how and what to study to be "approved" by God.

December 16

James 1:2-8

"Double-Minded"

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Tis' true. Tis' true. It's just a fact that an indecisive and wavering person, one who frequently has a hard time being established in one belief, is unstable.

December 17

Proverbs 15:17

"Which is Better?"

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

This is not about veganism vs. meat-eating. It's not about food at all. This deals with the choices one makes in life.

Would you rather be in a lavishly wealth-laden environment though it has lots of violence, chaos, and cruelty or rather would you prefer plainly decorated modest surroundings where there is love?

It's sad to say that some would choose the glitter. Scripture warns against that choice, however. Indeed, it is better to be in a situation

where there is love rather than hatred—regardless to the glam.

December 18

1 Samuel 3

"Your Servant Hears"

1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. 2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; 3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; 4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. 6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. 8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down:

and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. 15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. 17 And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. 18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good. 19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD

was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. [20] And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD. [21] And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

Story Background

Samuel was conceived after his mother, Hannah, (one of the two wives of Elkanah) prayed passionately for a child. Other-wife, Peninnah, had children. However, Hannah was extremely vexed because she was barren. One day, Hannah was at the temple with her husband. He was performing their customary sacrifices. There, Hannah vowed to give her child to the Lord, for His service, if the Lord would bless her with a child. She also promised that she would not allow the child's hair to be cut. It is believed that was a Nazarene vow. The priest, Eli, saw Hannah in an emotional state and even moving her lips, therefore, he concluded she was drunk. Nonetheless, once he understood her plight, he assured her that her request to God would be granted. Shortly thereafter, Hannah gave birth to Samuel after he was weaned, she took him to the temple in honor of her vow to lend him to the Lord for the

duration of his life.

Priest Eli had two horribly ungodly sons (Hophni and Phinehas) who were so evil that the people began hating to perform sacrifices. God told Eli that he and his sons would be replaced by a faithful priest who would act on behalf of God's heart and mind and would provide stability within the community.

Are we available to the Lord? Are we really hearing and responding? Can we honestly say to the LORD, "speak, your servant is listening".



December 19

Galatians 5:19-23
"Works of the FLESH & Fruit of the SPIRIT"

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

**goodness, faith, [23] Meekness,
temperance: against such there is no law.**

How does one know in what spirit someone is operating. There are two options: the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. They are distinctly different by their very signs—their manifestations.

A well-respected and famous preacher, for example, who is filled with lust or practices fornication, is operating in the works of the flesh. Likewise, a food service worker who is constantly tempted to snack on the available food choices but does not yield is operating in the fruit of the spirit.

Just as a health care professional may observe physical signs to make a diagnosis of an illness or condition, so can anyone determine the operating spirit within another person (or within themselves).

By signs, one can determine whether a behavior or action is of the flesh or of the Spirit.



December 20

James 4:17

“Does Sin Just Depend?”

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Is something that is "a sin" for one person, not a sin for another person? If you know better, do better. That's a saying, but what if you don't know better? Is the wrong not a sin?

December 21

Matthew 16:6-12
"Not Gain— It's Doctrine"

6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. 7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. 8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? 9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

DOCTRINE:
policy, principles, guidelines, code of belief

Important Reading:

5000 Fed
Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:34-44,
Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-15

4000 Fed
Matthew 15:32-39, Mark 8:1-9

Leaven of: Pharisees, Sadducees, & Herod
Matthew 6:6-12, Mark 8:14-21,
Luke 12;1,2

As many do today, the disciples thought the important issue was numbers. They thought Jesus spoke of quantity. But it wasn't concerning the amount of bread that Jesus warned. It was the doctrine, the mindset or teaching of practices, of which Jesus said to "beware".

Go To *(copy/paste)*:
"Leaven, Loaves, and Leftovers"
https://the1611.weebly.com/whats-the-difference-between-the-feeding-of-the-4000-and-the-5000.html

December 22

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

"Here, Not Here — There, Not There"

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Where would the Believer rather be—here on earth, which Paul says is "absent from the Lord", or out of the physical body—"absent from the body" which Paul says is being "present with the Lord"?

What Paul is saying is that ultimately, whatever the case, we should endeavor to be accepted by God.

December 23

Colossians 2:2-4

"The Mystery of God, of the Father, & of Christ"

[2] That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; [3] In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. [4] And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

Seeking wisdom? Want to be “in the know”? Desiring to be enlightened? Well, first, you have to avoid being tricked by sweet-sounding words. How? Acknowledge the mystery of God and Christ. Know that it is in God and Christ that you can be confident concerning wisdom. Secondly, understand that the priceless treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden and may be found in God.

Simply stated, you don't have to go outside of God for wisdom. In fact, if you do go outside of God for wisdom and knowledge, you’re vulnerable; you’re open to being deceived by positive, feel-good, widely accepted, and even overtly satanic lies. Be comforted by love. Be united in love. Have a solid understanding of the source of real wisdom.

December 24

1 Peter 4:12,13

"Fiery Trial: Purposeful & Prophesied"

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Wanna' know something that's almost out-of-this-world crazy hard to do? Even as a serious long-time Believer, it's sometimes very difficult to think of your personal "fiery trial" as being purposeful and prophesied with an attached precious promise.

December 25

Hebrews 13:5-6

"Be Content"

5 Let your conversation be without covetous-ness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Conversation- words and actions; overall behavior, lifestyle.

Allow and encourage your ways to be content with what you happen to have. Don't be covetous. You will not be abandoned by God. We can confidently believe that the Lord is our helper and we have no need to fear the harm others may cause.

December 26

Tobit 4:19

"Reasonable Requests"

Bless the Lord thy God alway, and desire of him that thy ways may be directed, and that all thy paths and counsels may prosper: for every nation hath not counsel; but the Lord himself giveth all good things, and he humbleth whom he will, as he will; now therefore, my son, remember my commandments, neither let them be put out of thy mind.

These are reasonable requests: for the Lord to direct our paths and that the advice we take is prosperous. It's a good prayer. It's a good desire.

December 27

1 Corinthians 10:13

"Able to Bear Temptation— Not Pain or Problems"

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

You know the verse some commonly *mis*quote about **God not putting more on you than you're able to bear**? This is where it comes from, but the verse does not say that at all. There is absolutely no promise in Scripture (when correctly read and interpreted) that God *puts* hardships on people but that they can handle them all.

This passage is in no way about difficulties in life. It's about temptation. It's saying temptations are common to humankind. Even so, God is faithful and will not permit you to be TEMPTED to such degree that you can't overcome that temptation because God makes a way for you to escape that temptation.

We're able to bear temptation; not any and

every burden, pain, problem or pressure.

December 28

Matthew 11:28
"Body and Soul"

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Question:
Is it possible to imagine a soul (spiritual) as being in hell? How is a "body" (physical) in hell? Is hell a real place or state of being or is it more of general concept? Was hell created just to control the behavior of people?

This passage indicates that humans cannot kill the soul of a human, but that someone is able to KILL or DESTROY the soul. Is the soul ever destroyed? Does this mean hell is a place or condition which kills/destroys the soul? If a soul is killed, does it no longer exist and, therefore, cannot be tormented forever? Does, rather, the destroyed "soul...in hell" suggest the killing or destroying is the very condition of hell?

After looking at and thinking about all the possibilities, let's remember the main point

which is to not fear people who can only kill one's body but never one's soul. Fear, high reverence, belongs to God who has control over both body and soul.

December 29

Exodus *chapters* 5:1–5:15

"Let My People Go"

We may sometimes find ourselves in periods of time where it seems as if we're stuck. Israel was stuck in a condition of physical bondage and servitude. What were some components of this oppression, stagnation and lack of freedom? Rejection, questions about direction, miracles ignored by others, plagues of various sorts, some victories, and some failures were all part of that condition.

What does it take for the powers that be to really "Let my people go?"

December 30

Hebrews 12:1-3

"What is 'THE SIN' That So Easily Overwhelms Us?"

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every

weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, [2] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. [3] For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Exactly what is "the sin" that easily knocks us down or pushes us off track? It has to be something faced by every single Believer.

I initially thought "**the sin**" was simply doubt, however, I have had to refine that definition. I now see it is not doubt alone, but rather a particular RESPONSE to doubt. If doubts lead to sincere prayer and God-led research, then that doubt is not sin at all.

That doubt is, instead, a thought which generates questions which, in turn, leads

to seeking truth through Scripture and through guidance of the Holy Ghost. However, if doubts lead to the rejection of God, if it's not "**the sin**", it certainly could a problem.

So, "**the sin**" that so easily besets us may better be defined as extreme and unchecked distrust that ultimately leads to the rejection of God. It is wayward and unfiltered doubt which is not submitted to God.

 **December 31**

Psalm 127:1

"Efforts"

Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

Are your efforts in life profitable or are they, instead, vain and useless? Is the LORD the builder (the foundation, the force, and the future) of the effort?

Let's be sure that the LORD builds the house so that our efforts are not wasted—that we not labor in vain.

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